

# 48 UNMISSABLE THINGS TO SHOOT IN 2014

## THE UK'S BEST PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday 14 December 2013



amateur

# Photographer

THE WORLD'S NO.1 WEEKLY PHOTO MAGAZINE



ON TEST

## NIKON D5300

PAGE 59

Latest mid-range DSLR update adds Wi-Fi and loses the AA filter



TECHNIQUE

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## AP MASTERCLASS

Tom Mackie shows five readers how to photograph country gardens



ON TEST

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## COMPACT BALL HEADS

Six of the best mini ball heads for travel tripods compared

SONY

# ALPHA 7R

## The ultimate full-frame camera?

- 36-megapixel sensor
- Carl Zeiss lenses
- Fits in a coat pocket



ON TEST

PAGE 49



# I AM MORE THAN A GIFT



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*At the heart of the image*





# Contents

**Amateur Photographer** For everyone who loves photography

**MANUFACTURERS** have been on a mission to reduce the size and weight of their cameras, while simultaneously adding new features to them. This desire to miniaturise was the *raison d'être* behind the invention of the compact system camera, when Panasonic demonstrated just how much bulk could be saved by replacing the DSLR's mirror and prism assembly with an EVF. Others followed suit, some employing ever smaller sensors in order to claim the 'smallest' and 'lightest' epithets.

This year, Canon started from scratch to make its EOS 100 25% smaller than its previous DSLRs, and Panasonic's Lumix DMC-GM1 CSC is so small it could be mistaken for a compact.

Until now, however, the full-frame sector has remained untouched by this desire to shrink – perhaps because it was considered that its advocates didn't care much about the weight of their gear. But that theory is about to be tested by Sony with its pair of full-frame compact system cameras that are just a fraction of the size and weight of existing DSLRs. You can make your own judgement on whether Sony is on the right track in our test of the Alpha 7R, on pages 49–54.



**Nigel Atherton**  
Group Editor



**A Leica camera co-designed by Apple's Jonathan Ive has sold for nearly \$2m in New York**

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A full-frame compact system camera with a 36.4-million-pixel sensor – the Sony Alpha 7R promises much, but does it deliver? Richard Sibley gives his verdict



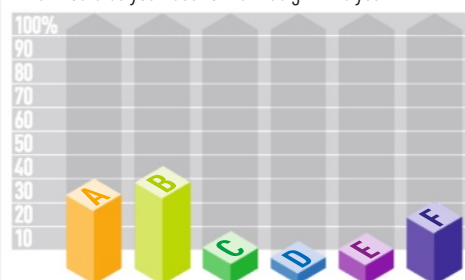
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**We test the Sony Alpha 7R full-frame CSC**

## THE AP READERS' POLL

**IN AP 23 NOVEMBER WE ASKED...**

What would be your ideal Christmas gift this year?



### YOU ANSWERED...

A A camera	30%
B A lens	35%
C A book	7%
D Clothing or a bag	3%
E Accessories	5%
F Bah! Humbugs	20%

**THIS WEEK WE ASK...** If you haven't already, would you consider moving up to a full-frame camera?

**VOTE ONLINE** [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk)

## 59 NIKON D5300

With a 24.2-million-pixel sensor, a new Expeed 4 processor, Wi-Fi and GPS functionality, Callum McInerney-Riley asks whether Nikon has done enough to make the D5300 stand out from previous models



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**HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT** Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight) for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

**HOW TO CONTACT US** Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU **AP Editorial Telephone:** 0203 148 4138 **Fax** 0203 148 8123 **Email** [amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com](mailto:amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com) **AP Advertising Telephone:** 0203 148 2516 **Email** [mark\\_rankine@ipcmedia.com](mailto:mark_rankine@ipcmedia.com) **AP Subscriptions Telephone:** 0844 848 0848 **Email** [ipcsubs@quadrantsubs.com](mailto:ipcsubs@quadrantsubs.com) **AP test reports Telephone:** 01707 273 773 [www.testreports.co.uk/photography/ap](http://www.testreports.co.uk/photography/ap)



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• 'Historic' camera fetches twice estimate • \$1.8m raised

## APPLE-DESIGNED LEICA MAKES A MILLION

**A LEICA** camera co-designed by Apple's Jonathan Ive has sold for nearly two million dollars – more than double its estimated value.

The one-off Leica digital rangefinder camera went under the hammer as part of the (RED) Auction at Sotheby's in New York.

The camera fetched \$1.8m (£1.1m), having been expected to raise \$500,000–\$750,000.

Jonathan Ive is Apple's senior vice-president of design.

More than 500 models of the full-frame Leica Digital Rangefinder Camera (pictured) were made, involving the manufacture of almost 1,000 prototype parts over the 85 days it took to create.

On the British Photographic History blog page, Royal Photographic Society director general Michael Pritchard writes: 'The sale shows the importance of a designer's name, the association with the world's most valuable brand, Apple, and the longevity of Leica as a collectible.'

The Leica-manufactured camera was also created with help from Australian Marc Newson, who designed the look of the Pentax K-01 interchangeable-lens camera announced last year.

Before the sale, Leica chairman Dr Andreas Kaufman said that input from Ive and Newson 'sets a new and unprecedented standard in modern photography'.

He added: 'As the only one ever to be produced, and boasting their unrivalled aesthetic, this Leica camera will truly create its own historic category when it goes under the hammer.'

The sale aimed to raise money for an organisation that helps



fight diseases such as AIDS.

Meanwhile, a rare 1932 Luxus Leica II, which was valued at just £5,000 12 years ago, has sold for around £390,000 at an auction in Hong Kong.

The gem, which belonged to a British amateur photographer who died last year, is one of only four Luxus Leica IIs models ever made.

It bears the serial number '88840' and the whereabouts of the other three models in the series is unknown, said Bonhams ahead of the sale.

Auctioneers had expected it to fetch £480,000–£720,000 and media reports suggested

it may break the £1.7m record set last year by another Leica camera.

However, the Leica IIs bowed out for HK\$4.8m (£386,981, including buyer's premium).

When shown to experts on the BBC TV's *Antiques Roadshow* in 2001, the vintage model was valued at just £5,000.

The camera comes with a 50mm f/3.5 Elmar lens.

The owner had acquired the Leica soon after the Second World War.

Last year, an O-series model, sold for a record €2,160,000 at the Westlicht auction in Vienna, Austria.

## SNAP SHOTS

● A photographer injured during violence in Ukraine carried on taking pictures despite being hurt. Gleb Garanich, of Reuters, was undeterred following clashes between protesters and police in Kiev. Blood can be seen coming from his head in images posted on the internet. Police reportedly deployed stun grenades and batons to disperse protesters. The violence was triggered by the government's refusal to sign an EU trade deal.

● Around 30 Filipinos gathered for a special photo shoot near London's City Hall to raise money for victims of last month's Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. They planned to donate the money collected to an organisation that carries out relief work in the country, reported [www.abc-cbnnews.com](http://www.abc-cbnnews.com).



## PHOTO SHOW EXTENDS TO HOTEL LOBBY

**HIGH** demand for space, which was triggered by the demise of Focus on Imaging, has forced a trade show to make use of a hotel foyer.

The Societies Photographic Convention is set to take place from 15–20 January at the Hilton London Metropole. The trade show

element runs from 17–19 January.

'Due to high demand for trade exhibition space, we have now extended the trade show area to include the fourth-floor foyer,' reveals a blog post on the Societies website.

Focus on Imaging ran for 24 years and took place in Birmingham. It was axed in May.

Entry to the Societies trade show is free for visitors who pre-register by 31 December. Afterwards, a ticket will cost £6.

The event also offers 150 hours of separate masterclasses, plus photo shoots and seminars, say organisers.

For details visit [www.swpp.co.uk/convention](http://www.swpp.co.uk/convention).



## Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheesman  
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Fax: 0203 148 8130  
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AP  
THIS  
WEEK  
IN...

1930

A laborious early equivalent of Photoshop was explained in detail this week in 1930 when a man's arm got in the way of what would otherwise have been an attractive seaside portrait of a child. The technique involved first making a copy negative of the print and, from this, two further prints. 'From one of the prints I carefully removed the man with scissors, following the line of the ball down the legs of the child to the base of the picture,' wrote P Fredk Visick. 'A piece from the stonework in the other print was then cut out and pasted beneath the part removed from the first print. The combined print was then copied in the camera to make a new negative.'

## A BLOCKING-OUT TIP By P. FREDK. VISICK.

EVERY amateur from time to time secures a good negative of a desirable subject, but is unable to make a satisfactory straight print from it owing to the inclusion of

Sometimes only a print is available, but in both cases if a good result is wanted, steps must be taken to block out the part that is not wanted and substitute something else that will not detract from the picture.

Recently such a photograph was brought to me to deal with. It is reproduced in Fig. 1, and it will be seen that part of the figure of a man seen from the back by the child spoils what would otherwise be an attractive portrait. Unfortunately, it could not be repeated.

### Solving the Problem.

The position was to remove the figure of the man and add something in its place. The original print had considerably more subject included than is shown in Fig. 1.

The first thing to be done was to make a copy negative of the print, and from this two prints were made. From one of the prints I carefully removed the man with scissors, following the line of the ball down the legs of the child to the base of the picture. A piece from the stonework in the other print was then cut out and other print was then cut out and pasted beneath the part removed from the first print. The combined print was then copied in the camera to make a new negative.

Care in lighting the combined picture for making the negative was needed, or the cut-out edges would have shown. This was prevented by having the light thrown upon the cut-out edges upon the focusing screen. Close inspection will reveal that the stonework put in place of the man is spade down. A few days and

dashes made it less conspicuous, and I think readers will agree that Fig. 2 is a considerable improvement; at any rate, the owner of the picture has



Fig. 1. Fig. 2.

# FUJI TO SHUT E6 PROCESSING LAB

**FUJIFILM** plans to close its E6 film-processing lab in November 2014.

The lab, which is based in Leeds, will remain open to give photographers time to have their Fujichrome Sensia process—paid film dealt with, said Fuji in a statement.

The Fuji lab is a partnership between Fujifilm and professional Leeds-based processing lab CC Imaging.

After 1 November 2014, photographers will continue to be able to have transparencies processed at CC Imaging, though not under 'Fujifilm Processing Laboratory' branding.

Fuji says CC Imaging is unaffected by the decision and stressed that the CC

Imaging lab itself is not closing.

Fujifilm product manager Gabriel Da Costa said: 'Sensia film has been a major part of Fujifilm's history, but increased production costs coupled with decreasing global demand led to Fujifilm Corporation in Japan discontinuing Sensia film in 2010.'

'As UK stocks of Sensia were run down, the numbers of E6 films being processed has obviously declined too.'

AP understands that CC Imaging is now recruiting extra staff due to a high work load.

Customers with any queries are urged to call Fujifilm on 0113 244 8221 or visit [www.fujifilmprocessinglaboratory.co.uk](http://www.fujifilmprocessinglaboratory.co.uk).



# US PRESIDENT ATTACKED OVER PHOTO RIGHTS

**AP RIGHTS WATCH**  
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**PHOTOGRAPHERS** in the United States say they are being denied the right to photograph President Barack Obama and have vented their frustration in a protest letter to White House press secretary Jay Carney.

The Associated Press is among dozens of news organisations to sign the letter in protest at what they claim is routine denial of the right to photograph and video the President while he is performing official duties.

The letter states: 'As surely as if they were placing a hand over a journalist's camera lens, officials in this administration are blocking the public from having an independent view of important functions of the Executive Branch of government.'

The White House has told the press its reason for closing certain events to photographers is that they have been deemed 'private'.

However, the press are angry that the White House then releases its own photograph of what it terms 'private' events through social media.

Among the 38 bodies protesting the photo rules are Associated Press, Reuters, *The Washington Post* and Getty Images.

As we went to press, news organisations had not received a response from the White House.

Certain US newspapers, including *USA Today*, have since refused to publish 'handout' photographs distributed by the White House, in protest at the restrictions.

# CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

## GUILDFORD PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The society plans to host a talk and slideshow on 'The Secret Lives of Puffins', by wildlife photographer Mark Sisson, on 6 January 2014. Tickets for non-club members cost £10. To book and for more details visit [www.guildfordphotosoc.org.uk](http://www.guildfordphotosoc.org.uk).



## SNAP SHOTS

● Olympus says it has improved the AF operation of its flagship OM-D E-M1 camera via a new firmware update. An Olympus spokesman told AP: 'The performance when using a single AF field in conjunction with the C-AF has been improved.' The update also aims to improve image stabilisation in sports and children mode, as well as C-AF. Claimed enhancements have also been made to live bulb image quality while noise reduction is switched on. For full details visit [www.olympus.co.uk](http://www.olympus.co.uk).

● 'Selfie', a word used to describe a digital self-portrait, has been made word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries after research found that its usage frequency rose 17,000% in a year. A selfie is described as 'a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website'. The word's roots have been traced back to 2002, when it was used in an Australian online forum.

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# INKJET PAPER MAKER PLUNGED INTO CRISIS

**ILFORD** Imaging Switzerland, which makes Galerie-branded photographic inkjet paper (pictured right), has declared itself insolvent after the 'last potential investor pulled out'.

The cash-strapped company has failed to find an investor, despite interest from more than 20 parties since a UK backer pulled out earlier this year.

The last potential investor withdrew their interest as we went to press.

In a statement, Ilford Imaging Switzerland said that the company 'is again facing liquidity issues and is no longer able to honour its full financial obligations'.

It sent a letter to a court in Fribourg 'declaring insolvency'. Staff have been informed, according to the statement.

The company is totally separate from Ilford Photo, which is based in the UK and is unaffected (Ilford Photo is the trading name of Cheshire-based Harman Technology, which makes traditional black & white photographic papers and film).

Earlier this year, Ilford Imaging

Switzerland said it employed 230-240 people worldwide, mostly in Switzerland, but with six based in the UK.

The firm warns that the effects of restructuring measures taken in August will not be seen until the first quarter of next year (see News, AP 5 October).

At the time, Ilford Imaging Switzerland said it planned to bounce back from its financial difficulties, while cutting 40% of its workforce.

The firm announced a series of financial acquisitions and partnerships it said would allow it to embark upon a new business plan.

The management team acquired the Ilford Imaging and Property companies.

However, the statement adds: 'After the liquidity issues during the summer, it was challenging to re-start the business, as many existing customers began to buy products from competitors, which resulted in a large negative impact on the company's revenue.'

Bosses said problems were compounded by reduced demand,



falling prices and the fact that 'most suppliers would only deliver raw materials against payment in advance'.

The statement continued: 'The management is working closely with the state and the appropriate authorities in order to minimise the negative impact on all parties involved.'

'No further information can be provided until the decision of the court is made and the next steps are understood.'

## LEICA TAKES OVER SINAR

**LEICA** has taken over Sinar, a maker of view cameras.

In a statement, the company said: 'Leica now possesses a complete product portfolio, from a medium-format digital camera system to digital view cameras and, as a result of the takeover, is now the only full range provider of digital camera systems in formats larger than the 35mm Leica full-frame format.'

The details were posted on Leica Camera AG's Facebook page.

Leica took a controlling 51% share in the Swiss company in 2006.

Financial details have not been disclosed.

# MPS FIGHT FOR CANON COMP GLORY

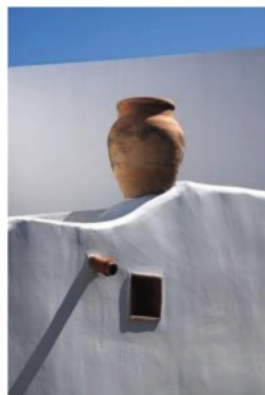
**POLITICIANS** have battled for glory at the All-Party Parliamentary Photographic Competition, with the best images winning a showcase in the House of Commons.

The contest pulled in around 400 submissions from MPs and Lords, and the winners were awarded a book of the best photos.

Although MPs won more plaudits than peers, MPs made up most of the entries.

Commenting on the quality of entries, Austin Mitchell MP, who chairs the Parliamentary All-Party Photography Group, said: 'Every year it gets better and better.'

Judges



included photographers Mike Maloney OBE and Andy Rouse, AP news editor Chris Cheesman and David Land, Editor of *The Royal Photographic Society Journal*.

House of Commons Speaker John Bercow, who opened



the exhibition, said: 'I think there is a characteristic in Parliamentarians, a desire... not to be outdone by others.'

Austin Freshwater, a sales director at Canon UK – which sponsored the contest – said the event was a 'great

opportunity to demonstrate how fantastic photography can be captured by anyone'.

The images have gone on display in the Upper Waiting Hall of the House of Commons, before being transferred to the House of Lords.



© PATRICK LICHFIELD

## SNAP SHOTS

● An artist installed cardboard-frame filters around London landmarks to give them the look of images posted on image-sharing website Instagram. Bruno Ribeiro, from Brazil, who launched the Real Life Instagram project, attached the physical frames to objects such as lamp posts. The idea was that smartphone users take photos through the gel-based filters, according to *Ad Week*.

● The quality of photos captured by young teenagers have won high praise at this year's RSPCA Young Photographer Awards. Wildlife photographer and judge Chris Packham described the entries as 'particularly strong'. 'The fact that they are so good really bodes well for their future,' he added. A shortlist of 37 images has been chosen from thousands and the winner will be announced on 19 December.

## LICHFIELD SHOW IS 'FASTEST-SELLING'

**AS BRITAIN** gets to grips with dull wintry skies, images of the Caribbean by Patrick Lichfield have sparked the fastest-selling show for a London gallery.

The exhibition, which ran at the five-year-old Little Black Gallery in Chelsea, was the first dedicated to Lichfield's Caribbean shots – and included unpublished work.

Although the gallery declined to say how much of Lichfield's work it has sold so far, spokesman Ghislain Pascal told *Amateur Photographer*: 'Lichfield is always incredibly popular with our clients, but this show of the Caribbean has really struck a chord and the pictures have been flying off the wall.'

He added: 'It helps that the pictures are glorious and sunny, while we have the cold British weather.'

Lichfield, who died in 2005 aged 66, was the 5th Earl of Lichfield and a first cousin once removed from the Queen.

He had a home in Mustique, which he first visited in the mid-1960s.

Lichfield used the Caribbean islands as a backdrop for many of his shoots.

The 'Patrick Lichfield's Caribbean' exhibition ran from 29 October–7 December.

The Little Black Gallery was opened in 2008. The gallery serves as the home of the Bob Carlos Clarke Foundation.

## SONY FEELS THE PINCH

**DEMAND** for Sony digital cameras shrunk 31% in the three months to 30 September 2013, compared to the same quarter last year.

The firm, which plans to shift resources towards 'high value-added models', sold 2.8 million compact cameras and interchangeable-lens models, compared to 4.1 million the year before.

Sony's imaging division, which includes video cameras, made an operating loss of 2.3 billion yen (around £15m).

Sales revenue fell 6.9% year-on-year, when taking a change in exchange rates into account.

Last year, Sony made a 2.2 billion yen operating profit over the same period.

Sony will continue to develop 'unique concepts'

# In next week's AP On sale Tuesday 17 December CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

## APOY

## FINAL ROUND AND RESULTS

In association with

**Panasonic LUMIX G**

**APOY 2013**

We reveal who won the top prize of £5,000 worth of Panasonic kit, and talk to the photographers

who finished second and third in APOY 2013

## TECHNIQUE



© CHRIS GATCOM

## THE 12 DIY DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

We've 12 great techniques for you to try out, including a macro tube, movie grip and a quick clamp

## LANDSCAPES

## WINTER WONDERLAND

**Clive Nichols** explains how your garden in winter brings a rich variety of subjects to photograph



© CLIVE NICHOLS

## READER PROFILE



© SCOTT ROBERTSON

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

AP reader and Landscape Photographer of the Year commended entrant **Scott Robertson** explains his technique

## TRENDS

## FACING THE FUTURE

What will 2014 bring in terms of camera technology? **Richard Sibley** looks at what might lie in store





# Sony Alpha Centres of Excellence

**Richard Sibley** speaks to **Dave Titchen**, showroom manager of Warehouse Express in Norwich

**ALTHOUGH** more well known for its online retail business, Warehouse Express has a showroom in Norwich, which also serves as a Sony Alpha Centre of Excellence. 'We have one of the largest showrooms in the UK. People come to visit the store from miles around,' says Dave Titchen, showroom manager. The showroom has a strong Sony presence, with a huge range of cameras and over 30 lenses on display, in every Sony mount. Particularly popular at the moment are the new Sony Alpha 7 and 7R full-frame interchangeable-lens compact system cameras, along with the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 II compact camera.

The Warehouse Express Showroom is staffed by a team of 12 photographers, each of whom is passionate about photography. 'Every few weeks we are visited by a member of the Sony team who trains our staff to use the latest Sony cameras and accessories. We want the customer to leave with the right product in their hands,' says Dave. On several occasions throughout the year, Warehouse Express also holds events where members of the public can come along and learn more about Sony cameras. For more information, visit [www.wexphotographic.com/?/events.html](http://www.wexphotographic.com/?/events.html).



**Wex Photographic Showroom**  
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Cardiff Camera Centre ..... Newport  
Castle Cameras ..... Bournemouth  
Devon Camera Centre ..... Exeter  
Digital Depot ..... Stevenage  
Great Western Cameras ..... Swindon  
Harrisons ..... Sheffield  
London Camera Exchange ..... Bristol (Horsefair)

London Camera Exchange ..... Chester  
London Camera Exchange ..... Chesterfield  
London Camera Exchange ..... Colchester  
London Camera Exchange ..... Leamington Spa  
London Camera Exchange ..... Manchester  
London Camera Exchange ..... Southam High Street  
Pantiles Cameras ..... Tunbridge Wells  
Park Cameras ..... Burgess Hill  
Warehouse Express ..... Norwich

Wilkinson Cameras ..... Preston  
Wilkinson Cameras ..... Southport  
York Camera Mart ..... York  
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BOOK

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## Four Seasons of Travel

Foreword by Andrew Evans. National Geographic, £30, hardback, 320 pages, ISBN 978-1-426-21167-6

**THE WRITERS** and photographers of *National Geographic* put their thoroughly stamped passports to good use with this coffee-table book of 400 of the world's most tempting destinations. Season by season, the contributors take you through some of the most unforgettable experiences and sights our world has to offer, with first-hand recollections that give a glimpse into the feel of the experiences. The photography is absolutely gorgeous. The resplendent cherry blossoms of springtime Kyoto, the autumn foliage of New York – all of it is captured with impeccable *National Geographic* perfectionism. With a copy of this, you'll never need another guide book.



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## BOOK

**More** By Rankin. teNeues, £70, hardback, 368 pages, ISBN 978-3-83279-708-9

**WHETHER** you truly consider Rankin to be 'edgy' is a matter of contention for some people, but it's difficult to deny that he delights in the unexpected. The best thing about *More*, an astoundingly weighty retrospective of Rankin's oeuvre, is the way it's structured. It leads the reader in with Rankin's celebrity portraits of comforting faces like Scarlett Johansson and Eva Green (above). These, though quite singular and immediately recognisable as Rankin images, are what you'd call normal. What follows thereafter, of course, is not.

Starting slow with an interesting series called 'Eyescapes', featuring disembodied corneas, we then quickly progress into the savagely explicit 'Nude' series, and from there the 'Fashion' images that feel more like biting satire than what we might think of as fashion. By the time you see Rosie Huntington-Whiteley standing on top of a pile of antelope skulls, you feel as though nothing will surprise you any more. You are wrong. Love it or hate it, you won't predict it.



## EXHIBITION

### Andrew Esiebo: Pride

10 January-8 February. Tiwani Contemporary, 16 Little Portland Street, London W1W 8BP. Tel: 0207 631 3808. Website: [www.tiwani.co.uk](http://www.tiwani.co.uk). Open Tue-Fri 11am-6pm, Sat 12pm-5pm. Admission free

**NIGERIAN** photographer Andrew Esiebo's images of barbershops and hairdressing paraphernalia in West Africa explore the cultural significance of hair in African society, and what really shines through is the feeling of community in his images. Many of the establishments are rustic or poorly built, but they have a real charm. It's a curious idea, but one that has been executed with technical assurance by someone with an evident gift for rapport.

## www.portraitsalon.co.uk

**A FORM** of *Salon des Refusés* – a French term for an exhibition of works rejected by the jury of the official Paris Salon art exhibition – Portrait Salon exhibits works that have been rejected for the National Portrait Gallery Photographic Portrait Prize. The site invites prominent industry members to make their selection, and publishes an annual newspaper of the images.

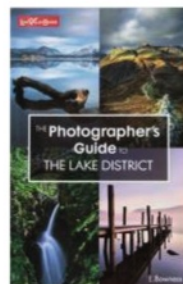
The site has some fantastic work that gives food for thought. Compare the results on this site to the actual winners of portrait prizes and you might find yourself getting worked up with indignation.



## WEBSITE

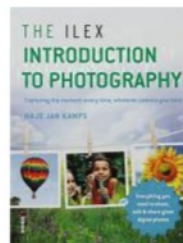
# CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



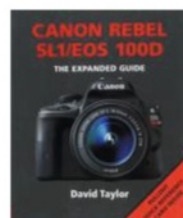
### ● THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE TO THE LAKE DISTRICT

by E Bowness, £12.95 It can often be overwhelming to travel to well-regarded photographic locations – the feeling that you need to do, see and photograph everything can leave you running around in a blind panic. A guide like this is an excellent tool for planning a trip, and if you're heading off to the Lake District you'd do well to pick it up. Location by location, it takes you through the sights and sounds of one of our best-loved natural beauties, helping you decide what you need to see and what you can afford to miss.



### ● THE ILEX INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY

by Haje Jan Kamps, £14.99 Certain names on photographic books assure you that you're in good hands, one of which is Haje Jan Kamps. Kamps takes a very rules-focused approach here – not that there's anything wrong with that, although it's an interesting contrast to some of his other works. If you know someone who's expecting their first camera in their Christmas stocking this year, this book could be just the right partner for it.



### ● CANON REBEL SL1/EOS 100D

by David Taylor, £14.99 In case you don't know, Rebel SL1 is merely Canon's American name for what we know as the EOS 100D. We've received numerous *Expanded Guides* here at AP, and as such we feel confident in recommending them to those who need a leg-up with their cameras. The lightweight EOS 100D packs a great punch for its size, and it's worth spending some time learning to get the most out of it, which this book should allow you to do.

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# Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 8GB media card\*



FUJIFILM

### DON'T GET STUCK IN THE ONE-WAY SYSTEM

The letter from Brian Browne titled *Please please me* in AP 30 November really resonated with me. Like Brian, I started learning from my father in the attic in 1959. Unlike him, I now have 15 years' experience with digital cameras and it has liberated me from the tyranny of judges and their idiosyncratic judgements. No longer do I have to look for 'approval' as there is no 'right way' to emulate.

I walked the aisles of Paris Photo last week, as I do every year, with its endless displays of mediocrity concealing occasional 'pearls' that shine like a beacon in the night. Are my 'pearls' the same as other people's? I doubt it. What it does do is explode the notion that only one way is right. Buy a day ticket with the Eurostar next year, Brian – if I can go from Aberdeen, you certainly can – and see what you like. I will make a bet that you will find someone on display who 'speaks' to you, and you feel less alone in consequence.

Ian Macilwain, Aberdeen

I have to agree with you, Ian. Visiting Paris Photo really hammers home just how diverse the field of contemporary photography truly is. I attended the fair for the first time this year. While I consider myself fairly well versed in the world of photographic practice having studied it for many years, it succeeded in opening my mind up even further to the overwhelming scope of the art. The notion that there is any right or wrong way of producing imagery is undone within minutes of navigating your way through the endless displays. Unfortunately, Brian is not the only person to feel defeated by camera-club judges. While I'm not against photography competitions per se, I often feel that turning photography into a competitive sport can cause irreparable damage. Whereas critiquing a photograph is one thing, saying an image is 'wrong' is bordering on preposterous. I often wonder how many great images and photographers we have lost due to the subjective opinions of one or two camera-club judges – Oliver Atwell, features writer

## Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3) fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateur photographer @ipcmedia.com

\*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

## Earn £50 Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

\*INA CHOICE OF COMPACTFLASH OR SDHC NOTE: PRIZE APPLIED TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY

## SENSOR AND SENSITIVITY

I can assure Chris Ryan (*Letters*, AP 16 November) that I am indeed aware that my Nikon D5200 has a sensor-cleaning function. Sadly, unlike Chris, I still experience dust on the sensor – and, no, I don't shoot in speedway dust storms, take pictures of the sky at f/22, and nor have I failed to read my D5200 manual, as Chris flippantly implied. I'm delighted that sensor dust is now an alien concept to him.

But my argument about sensor cleaning rests on the fact that no camera manufacturer has yet come up with a sensor that is protected from dust and grit in the first place. Sure, sensor-cleaning systems are common in many modern cameras. But they exist purely in the (often) vain hope that they will remove dirt already lodged on the sensor.

So I rest my case that until someone designs a sensor that is completely protected from the outside world, sensor dust will continue to be the bane of many photographers like me, who, unfortunately, lack Chris's skill (or possibly his luck) when it comes to switching lenses.

Terry Armstrong, Tyne & Wear

## VIDEO – WHAT'S THE GAME?

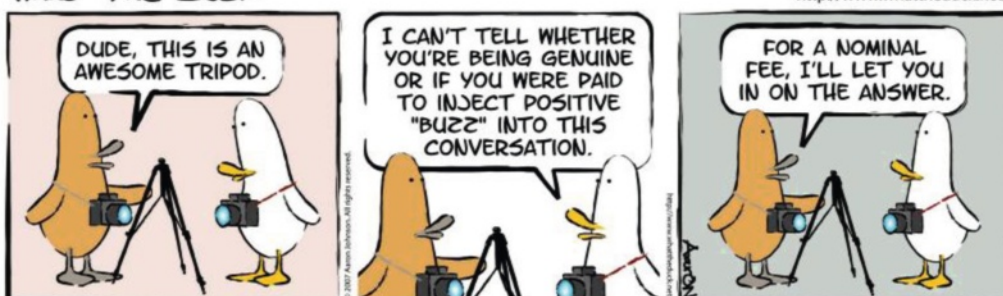
Why do so many digital cameras have a video facility? This can only add to the cost and complexity of the camera and surely something is lost by having two functions. Also, how much of the shutter operation does video use up? If I want a digital camera, then that is all that I want as I can buy a video camera separately. Actually, I don't like digital cameras anyway and will stick to my Pentax K1000, Super A and ME Super.

John C Kent, London SW6

Contrary to what many people think, adding a video facility does not really add much to the cost of the camera if it has live view anyway, because all the camera is doing is recording the live-view feed. Factors such as file formats, resolution and so on are a matter of software programming, so once the code has been created it costs nothing to add it to the camera. The only potential extra costs are in the need for a fairly powerful processor (which the camera will require anyway if it offers features such as fast burst rates) and if external mic or headphone ports are added, but this wouldn't cost a lot.

There are many reasons why video is added to cameras. At the consumer end of the market, for anyone who might also want a video camera (such as those with children), it saves buying – and then carrying – two devices. At the higher end, many pro photographers are now expected to provide video (such as at weddings) and the pro video industry is now also buying DSLRs in large numbers. In fact, this sector is growing at a faster rate than stills, especially among the younger generation of photographers who happily shoot both

## What The Duck



<http://www.whattheduck.net/>



stills and video and switch seamlessly between both mediums – **Nigel Atherton, Group Editor**

### MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

I had to write in to say that I entirely agree with John Gilbey regarding the smells of film photography (*Backchat*, AP 16 November). There is nothing quite like the heady chemical aroma you get when you peel the backing paper off a roll of 120 destined for the developing tank!

**Katherine Woodman, via email**

### NIKON'S GOT A DF EAR

What's wrong with Nikon? It used to be the brand proud of listening to the photographic community. But I cannot imagine any photographer asking for the Nikon Df, a camera with a price higher than a D800 but not the same specifications, with the sensor of a D4 but not the same frame rate, with the only plus point being the ability to mount pre-1977 lenses (which, of course, we all kept, waiting for this camera). And this retro-fit? It is the picture you want to show off, not the camera.

The latest range of camera introductions (D5300, D7100, D610, Df) contain no real innovations. I have owned a D300 since its introduction in 2007, and around 80,000 shutter releases later it still functions as it should (with a higher frame rate and more AF points than the Df). I photograph mainly birds. A professional camera with a DX sensor, a larger buffer and a higher write speed compared to what I have is what I would like to see in a camera for me. But Nikon? The moment Olympus introduces a decent long telephoto lens for its OM-D EM-1, I will switch!

**Emile Kimman, via email**

The Df may not be your cup of tea, Emile, but there's a huge appetite for retro-style cameras that has long been exploited by Olympus and Fujifilm, and now Nikon has joined in. Many photographers have been asking for

a digital version of the FM for years, and although this isn't quite it, it comes closer than anything else. As for Nikon's decision to base it on the D4 sensor rather than that of the D800, well that's a different discussion. But judging by the number of people I know who have already ordered a Df, it wouldn't surprise me if this was just the first in a new line from Nikon. Perhaps they'll do a DX version. A D400 has been long rumoured but has yet to see the light of day. As for Olympus, its 75-300mm lens goes up to the equivalent of 600mm, as does the Lumix 100-300mm lens, and both Samyang and Tokina do 300mm mirror lenses for micro four thirds – **Nigel Atherton, Group Editor**

### OOPS! ONE THAT GOT AWAY

AP 23 November featured an article on the photographic calendars and diaries available for 2014, but while the calendars listed are all fine productions, I would hazard a guess that all of them are the work of professional photographers. I find myself astonished that you missed out the most obvious 'amateur' effort, the *Countryfile* Calendar, which is produced every year in support of Children in Need. It must be one of the very few calendars totally produced by amateur photographers, as the *Countryfile* Calendar competition rules say that all photographs must have been taken by non-professional photographers. I am always stunned at the beauty and imagination in every one of the photographs in it. Surely *Amateur Photographer* should have given it a special mention, given that it is an amateur-only competition. It is, by the way, still available for £9, including postage, from [www.hcscalender.co.uk](http://www.hcscalender.co.uk). We've got ours!

**Ian F McRae, Angus**

Apologies for the omission, Ian, we will be sure to add it to the list to include next year, especially given that it's for a such a worthy cause – **Nigel Atherton, Group Editor**

### DEAR ZOO

Colchester zoo has just published a souvenir book of photographs and I am pleased to say that they have included one of my pictures! I am sure that the tips I have received over the years from AP have contributed to my success.

**Keith Hughes, Surrey**

Congratulations, Keith. I hope they paid you or at least gave you a credit – **Nigel Atherton, Group Editor**



© KEITH HUGHES

# BACK CHAT

Photography isn't seen as art in some areas, so AP reader Melvyn Dove finds a way of 'going arty'

**THE TRIANGLE** formed between Bristol, Exeter and Bournemouth contains a wealth of 'art'. There are frame makers, galleries, glass workers, printers, ceramic crafts, workshops, theatres, musicians and sculptors. There's an Arts by the Sea festival, Somerset Arts Week and Dorset Arts Week, among others. So you'd think there would be more outlets for photographers.

Photography doesn't seem to be regarded as an art form. Why is this, when it's a way of painting with light, of recording shapes and patterns? Surely every press of a camera's shutter button is recording something an artist wants us to see.

I think one problem is that in its pure form, a photograph is too real, and we perceive 'art' as coming from the imagination. Why is a painting in the shape of Durdle Door considered art, while a detailed photograph is not?

Possibly too, with a painting, it's easier to see the author's input and style – factors that again are easily masked by photography's perfection. For example, despite the inherent visual imperfections of an Impressionist painting, many will more readily classify as art the work of Monet than, say, the clear, detailed pictures produced by Heather Angel or even Ansel Adams. Perhaps in art, the gap between real and unreal needs to be deliberately wide.

I found I was inspired by an arts listings magazine. Much of the artwork featured wasn't based on photography, but of the pictures I liked, whatever the media, there were general trends. I wondered whether I could go some way towards the same end using a camera.

The first thing was to challenge colour perception. In a landscape, skies and clouds can be all sorts of colours, as can vegetation and other features – with the proviso that the colours complement each other. The colour-swapping clocks from an early image-editing program sprang to mind.

The second thing is to challenge the picture format. Many of the influential pictures used a square format, which is something that I hardly ever do. This is certainly good for portraits, and I think seeing several square 'blocks' side by side adds to their appeal. Having stuck with 4:3 for so long, I have been experimenting with a 16:9 format, and found it suitable for bird and motorbike pictures.

The next factor came when I was playing with edge detection as a means of 'sharpening' images. I found that by duplicating my base layer, running an edge detect on the new one and then blending the two with a value mode, I ended up with a colourful orange/blue palette in the manner of a line drawing. The effect is reminiscent of an illustration in a child's book. It works well on the engineering of motorbikes, and buildings. I don't know whether others would regard it as art, but I like the results so far.



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## PHIL JONES

Phil Jones is a British photographer with a passion for wildlife and landscapes. His book, *Llwybr Arfordir Ceredigion Coastal Path* (published by Gomer Press, ISBN 978-1-848-51213-9, price £19.99) is a selection of photographs depicting the outstanding beauty of the area. Phil has also submitted a further book project relating to wildlife in west Wales.

To see more images by Phil Jones, visit his website at [www.philjonesphotography.com](http://www.philjonesphotography.com)



# PHOTO INSIGHT

**Professional photographer Phil Jones explains how he captured his award-winning shot of starlings on Aberystwyth Pier**

**THIS** photograph, which I took early last year at Aberystwyth Pier in Ceredigion, won the Urban Wildlife category of the 2012 British Wildlife Photography Awards.

The starlings roost under the pier every year, usually arriving in late October/early November and leaving in spring, and I have photographed them many times. The classic starling shot is of a cloud of birds wheeling over the land in various organic shapes, and I have certainly got a few shots like that, but I try to look for different compositions to show the birds in a new way. I have photographed them backlit by the setting sun, with a wideangle lens, with a fisheye lens and from the pier itself.

This shot was planned inasmuch as I knew the birds would start to roost and other birds would fly past. I wanted to get the juxtaposition of the birds' movement and the industrial lines of the pier. I used a slow shutter speed to add blur to the

moving birds while keeping the perching starlings relatively sharp. The day I took this photograph was not good in terms of the sunset, but the lack of strong backlighting made it great for this shot.

The starlings are so quick and varied in their movements that there is much to experience with them. The stunning swirling patterns they make, the noise (wings and chirps) and the smell can be overwhelming. In these situations, you must have a plan. A few years ago the plan was to photograph the backlit birds making fiery shapes under the pier, but last year I went for a movement effect with the starlings swirling and a few static birds perched on the pier infrastructure.

I used a Sigma 300-800mm lens on my Canon EOS 7D with a Manfrotto tripod and Hähnel wireless remote release so I could keep my hands warm in my pockets! As I was using a slow shutter speed, I had





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## **'I use Lightroom for all post-processing work and find that I rarely use Photoshop'**

the luxury of using ISO 100. The speed was 1/13sec with an aperture of f/7.1 and a focal length of 500mm.

I use Lightroom for all post-processing work and find that I rarely use Photoshop these days. I shoot in raw and all images have basic adjustments for contrast, saturation, vibrancy, sharpening and noise reduction. This image was also cropped so that the black struts of the pier form a natural frame to the photograph. I always try to keep the end result true to the scene as I recall it.

This image helped me win an award and I

think competitions are a great place to help improve your photographic skills. I have a complete set of Wildlife Photographer of the Year portfolios, Take a View and British Wildlife Photography awards. Seeing how other people have captured a scene often suggests alternatives and makes me aware of where I can go to see wildlife or landscapes when out and about.

I think you can learn something from almost any photograph. Even if you don't like a picture, you can study it to understand why you don't think it works and what would make it work in your eyes. Don't copy the views on offer, though. I think there are too many copycat shots of landscapes. By all means go to the place, but look around and find your own viewpoint of the scene. Ultimately, you have to take photographs that you like – and if others appreciate them, that is a bonus!

I bought my first 35mm camera, a

tank-like Zenit, when I was 18 years old, and started developing and printing black & white photographs in the sixth-form college darkroom. In doing this, I think I got a sound grounding in how a camera works, how to make a good exposure and the knowledge of what you can get away with through rescue work in the darkroom. I moved through different 35mm set-ups, but really returned to photography with the advent of good-quality digital cameras as they allowed me to take control of the whole process again, from taking the photograph to printing the final result as I wanted it.

I live in a very beautiful part of Britain, with great landscapes and accessible wildlife, and am inspired by the world around me. I am also incredibly lucky to have a hugely supportive wife, Sarah, who is willing to stand in the freezing cold on Aberystwyth promenade in winter for a bag of chips! **AP**

**Phil Jones  
was talking to  
Debbi Allen**

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# Landscapes

The Amateur Photographer Masterclass with **Tom Mackie**

**Tom Mackie** shows five AP readers how to make the most of autumn colours in Cheshire's splendid **Tatton Park Gardens**.

**Gill Mullins** reports on the day

**IT MAY** have been late, but it has been the most visually glorious autumn for decades, so what better theme for our landscape *Masterclass* than capturing autumn hues in one of England's most beautiful gardens, at the heart of historic Tatton Park in Cheshire. Nestled within Tatton's 1,000-acre deer park, the 50-acre landscaped gardens surrounding the neoclassical Mansion House include extensive – and still productive – kitchen gardens, a breathtaking arboretum and a remarkable series of glasshouses.

When we arrive we breathe a sigh of relief that the St Jude's Day storm three days earlier has, fortunately, caused little damage this far north, and the trees, from magnificent beeches and sweet chestnuts to ironwoods and rare conifers, are still cloaked in their turning leaves. The only unwanted intrusions are the haunting forms

of little white cloth ghosts fluttering in the branches. Well, it is Halloween – what else could we expect!

We kick off the day with our five readers each choosing a Pentax DSLR and lens – either the K-5 II or K-5 IIs – to use alongside their own kit. Our expert, landscape photographer Tom Mackie, recommends heading first to the Japanese Gardens. Acknowledged as the finest in Europe, they are something of a tourist trap, especially in autumn with the acers at their burgundy best, so it's a good idea to get there early to avoid the crowds.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

In a setting like this, with so much going on, from trees and shrubs, pathways, streams and bridges, to a whitewashed, thatched traditional tea house and a classic pagoda

(actually a Shinto shrine), the trick is to keep it simple. 'There's so much to look at and think about that it's all too easy to cram too much in the frame, resulting in a confusing image,' says Tom. 'Instead, go for compositions with minimal elements for maximum impact. In a crowded scene, it's all about creating order out of chaos.'

The best approach is to take your time. Rather than rushing in and setting up your tripod immediately, stand back and have a think about the sort of shots you could take, then walk the area with your camera handheld, checking different angles and discovering the best viewpoints to shoot. 'You'll find it helpful concentrating on a focal length of around 50mm,' adds Tom. 'If you go too wide in a packed environment like this, you'll end up including too much distracting detail.'

## WORK WITH THE LIGHT

Another key thing to watch is the lighting. For garden photography in general, a mixture of passing cloud and bright sunshine is ideal. 'This combination gives you the opportunity to include some



## About the readers

### Paul Greenhalgh



'As a relative novice, today has been a real eye-opener around composition, framing and lighting,' says Paul. 'I'll certainly be doing a lot more thinking before snapping from now on!'

### Jonathan Lewis



'I usually do a lot of pet and equestrian photography, so today I wanted to try something different and learn some new ideas and techniques,' says Jonathan.

### Nuala O'Rourke



Nuala tends to shoot macro details, as well as show jumping – her daughters both compete – but she has never really tried landscapes. 'I've enjoyed working with a tripod and finding out how to make the most of overcast conditions,' she says.

### Mark Payne



'I like landscapes, but don't often shoot gardens, so this was an interesting opportunity to try them, meet like-minded people, and have some fun,' says Mark.

### Shirley Rivera-Brown



'I prefer landscapes and macro,' says Shirley, 'so this was a chance to practise new techniques and work on my framing and composition – I've learned a lot'



interesting skies when photographing open areas,' says Tom, 'and then when the sun goes behind the clouds, you've also got the soft, overcast lighting that is key for perfectly saturated foliage and flowers, especially in scenes where you can crop the sky out completely.'

One of the main issues on the day is controlling for highlight areas that are blowing out. 'If strong sunlight means you're getting highlights burning out in the sky and you can't crop those areas of sky out – perhaps because they're showing through tree branches at the top of the frame – there's no easy technical solution,' Tom admits.

'If you use a grad filter to tone down the sky, you'll invariably overdarken the top of the trees, too – that approach really only works out in the open. It all comes back to the old-fashioned basics of lighting and composition. You simply have to wait for the sun to go behind the clouds and that will get rid of the highlight spots naturally. The key is to work the day according to the conditions you have, not the conditions you want.'

## Your AP expert... Tom Mackie



A former contributor to AP's *Photo Insight* series, Tom Mackie is one of the world's leading photographers. He has spent many years as an architectural, industrial and

landscape photographer, and has a penchant for panoramic photography. Tom has published several books and written numerous articles for photography magazines. He also lectures on photography and regularly holds workshops in the UK and abroad. [www.tommackie.com](http://www.tommackie.com)



SHIRLEY RIVERA-BROWN



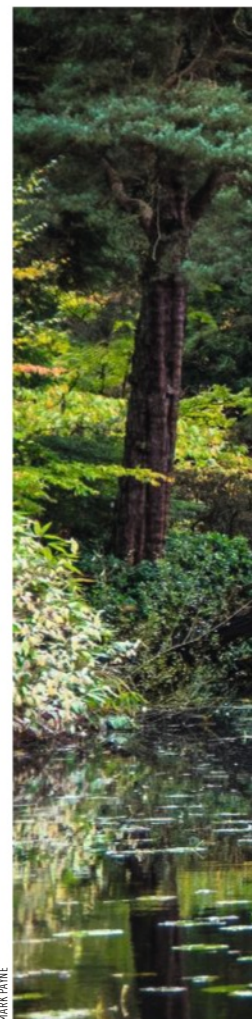
JONATHAN LEWIS

## Concentrate on colour

Cropping in to focus on one or two brightly coloured leaves (see left) can be a very effective way to capture the essence of autumn. Remember that a polarising filter will remove reflections and distracting highlights from the surface of water.

## Edit the image

Create a strong image by isolating specific shapes and details, as Jonathan has done here (see left) by focusing attention on the rounded shapes of the shrubs and maple.



MARK PAYNE





## Go mono

When a scene has blocks of similar colour, try converting your image to monochrome to put focus on the textures instead. Here, a 10-stop ND filter has also added interest to the sky by enabling a long-enough shutter speed to capture the clouds' movements.



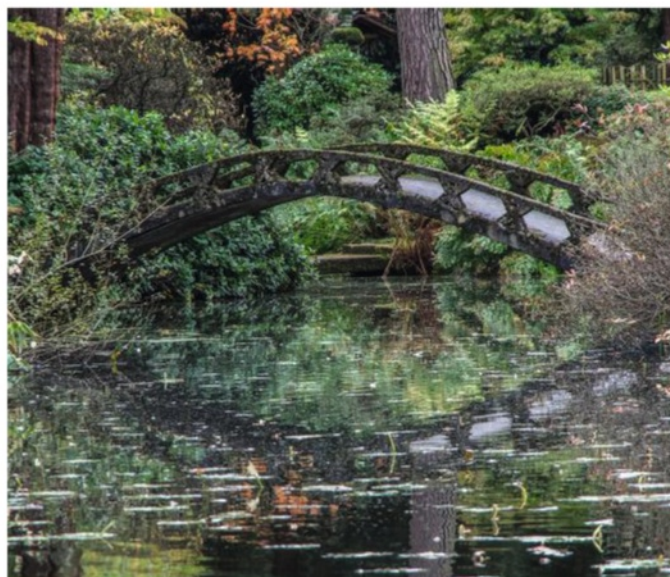
MARK PAINÉ

## Top tip

**Before you set up your tripod, take a few minutes to walk around with your camera handheld and check different angles, ideas and composition ideas – this will save a lot of time in the long run.**

## Scene within a scene

Use a telephoto lens to zoom in and isolate scenes within scenes, as Mark has done here (see above and below). It's a great way of maximising your opportunities without having to reposition your tripod.



MARK PAINÉ



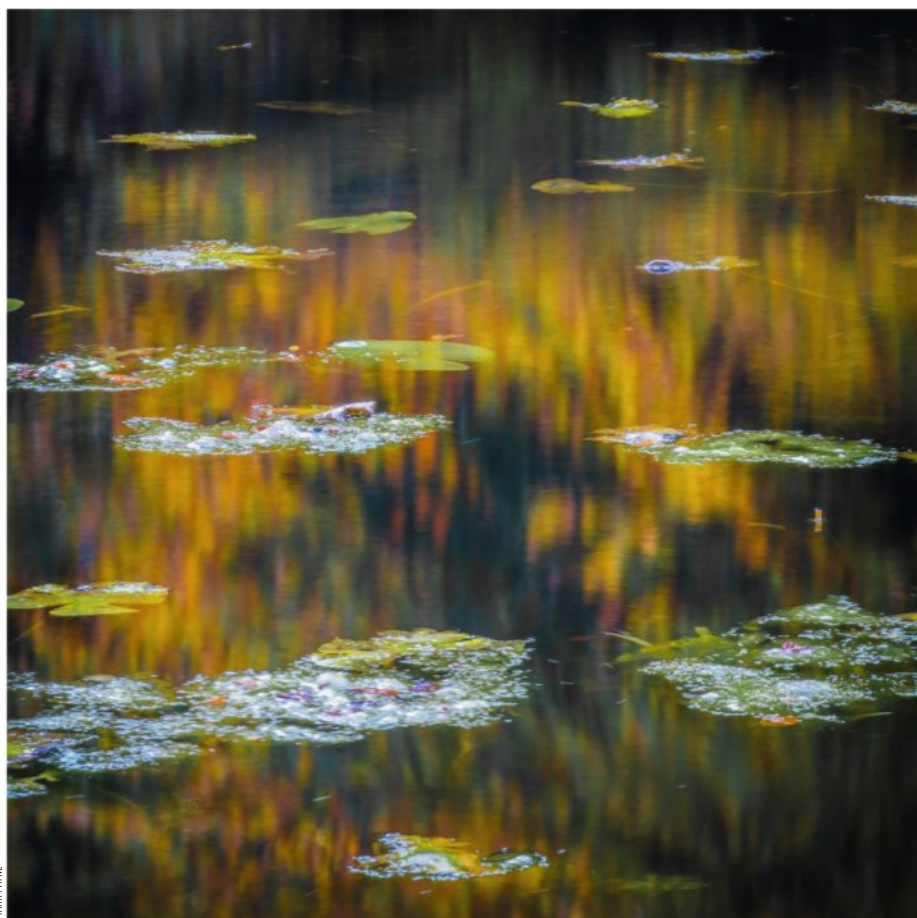
## Telephoto details

Use the long end of a telephoto lens to compress all the elements and isolate details from a more obvious overall view. This also enables you to omit the sky, which is particularly useful if it's overly bright and burning out.



MARK DAVINE

**'Use a telephoto lens to compress all the elements and isolate details from a more obvious overall view'**



MARK DAVINE

## Top tip

It's always a good idea to work out the optimal aperture of your lens. Take a series of test shots through the aperture range and then look at the results either on your LCD screen or in Photoshop. You'll usually see that it softens either side of f/5.6-8.



NIALA O'DONNELL

## Go in close

Close-up details can create evocative autumn images – use a macro lens or the long end of your telephoto optic to capture them.



NIALA O'DONNELL



## Tatton Park

<b>Location</b>	Tatton Park is signposted from the M56 Junction 7 or the M6 Junction 19. For satnav, use the postcode WA16 6SG. The gardens are at the Rostherne entrance at the north end of the park, and there is ample car parking.
<b>Opening times</b>	From 28 October-28 March, the park and gardens are open Tuesday-Sunday and New Year's Eve (gardens 10am-4pm, park 10am-5pm). From 29 March-26 October, both park and gardens are open daily (gardens 10am-6pm, park 10am-7pm).
<b>Admission</b>	Entry by car is £5 per vehicle (£2.50 Blue Badge holders). Entry to the gardens is £6 adults, £4 children (aged 4-15), free to National Trust and RHS members.
<b>Contact</b>	Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6QN. Tel: 01625 374 400. Website: <a href="http://tattonpark.org.uk">tattonpark.org.uk</a> .





MARK PAINTE

## Orientation

Keep an eye open for different orientation possibilities – panoramas (see above) and verticals (see right) can be very effective and give a totally different feel to the same scene.

## Equipment checklist

**Tripod and cable release:** Steadies your camera during longer exposures to prevent blur.

**Macro lens:** Great for natural details, especially when it's raining.

**Wideangle lenses:** Ideal for sweeping vistas and broad scene-setting shots.

**Telephoto lenses:** Useful for compressing all the elements in the frame, or for close-ups with very shallow depth of field.

**Polarising filter:** Cuts out unwanted reflections in water features and boosts colour saturation.

**ND grad filters:** Ideal when you're shooting in wide-open spaces to tone down the sky.



PAUL GREENHALGH

## More to explore

For a great selection of gardens, visit the National Trust website ([www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)) or try the Great British Gardens website at [www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk](http://www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk). For wonderful autumn and early winter colour, try Kew Gardens in London, Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire, or Bodnant Gardens in North Wales.



## Would you like to take part?

**EVERY** month we invite three to five AP readers to join one of our experts on a free day's assignment. Our experts include **Tom Mackie** (landscapes), **Cathal McNaughton** (documentary and photo essays), **Annabel Williams** (location portraiture), **Luke Massey** (wildlife), **Andrew Sydenham** (studio) and **Heather Angel** (still life). Our next confirmed *Masterclass* will be with **Tom Mackie in Newcastle**. To take part, visit [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/masterclass](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/masterclass). Please state which *Masterclass* you would like to attend and include your name, address, email address, daytime telephone number, some words about your work and three or four images.

TOM MACKIE



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# Great **photo ideas** for 2014

**Debbi Allen, Jon Stapley and Oliver Atwell** present a calendar of photographic opportunities from all over the UK for the coming year, including must-see events and ideas to inspire

## JANUARY

### Chinese New Year

**START** your photographic year off with a bang by visiting your local Chinese New Year celebrations. If you're lucky enough to be within travelling distance of London, the city claims it has the largest Chinese New Year celebrations outside of Asia, so Chinatown is well worth a visit.

Taking place on 31 January 2014, the celebrations include music, Chinese dragons, lion dances, acrobatics and firecrackers. Although the celebrations usually begin in

Trafalgar Square, Chinatown will be crowded with food stalls and cultural displays to photograph, too. Festivities begin at 10am with a parade that starts at Duncannon Street, moving along Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue. An official opening ceremony then takes place in Trafalgar Square, followed by dragon dancing, music and performances.

With so much going on, you might want to travel light. A tripod will get in the way of the crowds, so try to shoot handheld or use railings or a lamp-post for support. Use a fast shutter speed to freeze the action, and if you have any art filters on your camera, why not select a vivid one to make the most of all that red!



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## FEBRUARY

### Snow

**THERE'S** something about snow that brings out the child in us. Seeing the landscape dusted in fine white snowflakes takes many of us back to the days of building snowmen and sledging. It's this kind of wonder that makes snow such a fascinating subject for photographers. It's not often that we see snow on our British shores, but when we do it sends photographers scrambling for their cameras to capture the beautiful white scenery.

The first thing you need to know about shooting snow is that it presents its own problems. Often the scene can



© NIELA HERTON

end up looking grey. This is because the camera, if left on auto mode, will become overwhelmed by the amount of white in the scene and will attempt to combat it by finding the midtone middle ground. You can rectify this by using your camera's exposure-compensation function to overexpose



© NIELA HERTON

the shot by a stop or two. Alternatively, expose for the darker subjects in your scene, such as trees and bushes. This will bring the shot into line with what you're seeing in front of you and protect the crucial details from blowing out.

You may also find that your snow

scenes have a slightly blue hue. This is because the expanse of white can confuse your camera and play havoc with its auto white balance. The easiest way to correct this is to carry a small piece of white paper around with you and use your camera's manual white balance function. Alternatively, you can simply shoot in raw, and then you will be able to tweak and fix your shot in post-production.

Finally, make sure you carry your batteries as close to your body as you can. Out there in the cold, your battery will not last long – so it would also be a good idea to carry a spare. After you switch batteries, put the dead battery in your pocket. If you're lucky, your body heat could well put some life back into it and give you those crucial extra couple of shots that round off your day.



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© LIGHTING CEREMONY FOR THE SOPHIA 2014 WINTER OLYMPICS IN OLYMPIA, ITC

#### JANUARY

#### New Year's Day parades

If you're not too tired from the night before, head out and about on New Year's Day and watch the celebrations unfold. London hosts the biggest one in the country. [www.londonparade.co.uk](http://www.londonparade.co.uk)

#### Gardens

There are plenty of plants to photograph at this time of year, and some, such as snowdrops, will be in flower. Visit [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk) for a list of gardens throughout the country

#### Ice Sculpting Festival

From 10-12 January, you can visit the London Ice Sculpting Festival and vote for your favourite ice sculpture or just take some photos. [www.londonicesculptingfestival.co.uk](http://www.londonicesculptingfestival.co.uk)

#### FEBRUARY

#### London Fashion Week

While you won't be able to shoot inside the event, from 14-18 February you should see some colourful and photogenic characters out and about in London. [www.londonfashionweek.co.uk](http://www.londonfashionweek.co.uk)

#### Jorvik Viking Festival

To be held on 15-23 February, this may sound like an odd inclusion, but visit the website and you'll see some great ideas for dramatic images. [jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/festivals](http://jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/festivals)

#### Winter Olympics

You might not be able to get any good shots of the Winter Olympics in Russia from 7-23 February, but there will be plenty of celebrations and events going on in the UK too. [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)





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## MARCH

### First World War commemoration events

**NEXT** year will mark 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War. This landmark anniversary will be commemorated throughout Britain in 2014 with a programme of events that readdress and reaffirm the personal sacrifices made by millions. Here we highlight a few of the tributes that are taking place.

Imperial War Museums (IWM) London, North (in Manchester) and Duxford (in Cambridgeshire) will host a groundbreaking new collection and innovative technology to offer new stories and perspectives on the first global war.

The National Portrait Gallery in London is to commemorate the centenary with The Great War in Portraits, an exhibition running

from 27 February–15 June, which will be the start of a four-year commemorative programme at the gallery. Around 80 paintings, photographs, sculptures, films and drawings will go on display and, as well as iconic portraits of Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Winston Churchill, the exhibition will reflect the war experience of people from all social classes who served from throughout the Commonwealth.

Other places of note holding events include Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, the Historic Dockyard in Kent, Edinburgh Castle and various museums and galleries across the UK.

For details of commemoration events near you, visit [www.greatwar.co.uk](http://www.greatwar.co.uk) or [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org).

## APRIL

### The London Marathon

**THE LONDON** Marathon attracts top athletes and amateur runners as they all try to complete the gruelling 26.2-mile course. More than 45,000 runners take part and half a million spectators line the route, which passes some of the capital's most iconic landmarks. With all this going on, it can be hard to know where to go to get the best photos.

According to the official website ([www.virginlondonmarathon.com](http://www.virginlondonmarathon.com)), the best places to watch the runners (although they might also be the busiest places) are:

- Greenwich Park: The race starts here, so it is very crowded.

- London Bridge area: This marks the halfway point.

- Tower Bridge: A great photo opportunity to see the runners crossing the famous bridge, but again, very crowded.

- Embankment: As the competitors head up the Embankment, opposite the London Eye, past the Houses of Parliament, to Nelson's Column, they face the final gruelling mile.

- The Mall: Watch as tortured and exhausted faces turn to joy on crossing the finish line.

If you're trying to get some great shots of the runners, experiment with your shutter speed to freeze the runner but blur the background. You'll need to practise your panning skills to get this right. Why not try turning your camera on the spectators too, to get some images that stand out from the crowd.



© LONDON MARATHON



© MANCHESTER IRISH FESTIVAL

MARCH

#### St Patrick's Day

With St Patrick's Day fun runs, parades and other events taking place worldwide, the opportunities for great street photography on 17 March are endless. [www.st-patricks-day.com](http://www.st-patricks-day.com)

#### March Equinox

Thursday 20 March marks the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere, with daylight hours increasing and temperatures warming. [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)



© GEORGE BLAUNIER/SPORTSPHOTO.COM

#### RBS 6 Nations

One for rugby union fans, as Ireland face Italy and Scotland face France on 8 March, while England meet Wales on 9 March. [www.rbs6nations.com](http://www.rbs6nations.com)



© REBEKKA

APRIL

#### Easter egg hunts

Next year, Good Friday is on 18 April and Easter Monday on 21 April. For several years, the National Trust has run Easter Egg Trails supported by Cadbury. For details see [www.eastereggtrail.com](http://www.eastereggtrail.com)



© VESTERIAN

#### Grand National

Why not try to grab some tickets for a day at Aintree on 5 April and get sports shots or portraits of all the dressed-up folk watching. [www.aintree.co.uk/pages/grand-national](http://www.aintree.co.uk/pages/grand-national)



© VESTERIAN

#### The Boat Race

Whether you support Oxford or Cambridge, or neither, the atmosphere and action make it well worth visit the Thames in London between Putney and Mortlake on 6 April. [theboatrace.org](http://theboatrace.org)





© LONDON MARATHON



## MAY

### Chelsea Flower Show

#### GREEN-FINGERED

photographers should get booking their tickets for the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show 2014, which are on sale now. The gardens and displays at the show provide a wealth of photographic opportunities – unleash your close-up and macro chops or step back and capture some shots of the spectacular displays. You may even catch a few shots of the royal family, who always attend the opening day of the show.

The Chelsea Flower Show celebrated its 100th year in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital in 2013. You can see some of the images captured there on the Royal Horticultural Society website ([www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)) if you're thinking of getting inspired – some of the highlights included a display from Birmingham City Council inspired by *The Lord of the Rings*, an Australian garden and a garden created from a derelict urban

site, titled 'The Wasteland'.

While applications are still being reviewed for this year, events already confirmed include a herb garden inspired by Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit stories, a display commemorating those involved in the First World War, and a Thailand-inspired piece by Pattaya City and Nong Nooch Botanical Garden.

Although a tripod is useful for getting sharp shots of plants and

flowers, the crowds at Chelsea Flower Show may not make this practical so you might need to rely on a steady hand. Keep your aperture nice and wide – this will not only enable you to use fast shutter speeds, but will also get you the lovely blurred backgrounds that mark a good plant portrait.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show runs from 20–24 May 2014 at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW3 4SL.



© RHUS/IN ALTS

## JUNE

### Wimbledon

**ANOTHER** annual sporting event that captures the attention of even those without a sporting bone in their body is the tennis extravaganza that is the Wimbledon Championships. This year the tournament takes place from 23 June–6 July.

You don't have to have a press pass to be able to capture the lightning speed and athleticism on display. Sitting in the crowd is a great place to take images – in fact, there's no better place to see the action. In the opening days of the tournament there are a number of matches taking place



© OLIVER ATWELL

where you are free to come and go as you please, and plenty of opportunities to get great sporting shots.

It used to be that SLRs were prohibited from the grounds, but as cameras have become more affordable for amateurs, the All England Club has had to relax its rules. The only thing it asks is that the use of photographic equipment does not inconvenience any other person on the grounds. That means no flash and

no gargantuan zoom lenses. Plus, any images you take must not be used commercially unless you have obtained prior authorisation.

Due to the time of year at which the tournament takes place, you're likely to be faced with strong summer light that will bring out the verdant greens of the courts and offer deep shadows to contrast with the bright white of the players' outfits. It's also important to remember that Wimbledon isn't simply about what's happening on the court. The event is a great opportunity to document the atmosphere that surrounds the event.

Ticket prices can vary from £48 to £148, depending on the day and the court you're looking to visit. For more details visit [www.wimbledon.com](http://www.wimbledon.com).



© VETTOR FRANCOVSKI



© KITT HUGHES/TOUR VOR MEER



© PHILIP EXMOOR

MAY

#### May Day celebrations

Festivities on 1 May are a strong English tradition, and many smaller communities are still keeping it alive and well. Why not head out and see if you can capture some shots of the maypole?

#### Brighton Festival

From 3–25 May, Brighton & Hove comes alive with music, dance, theatre, circus and art. Events go on throughout almost the entire month. [www.brightonfestival.org](http://www.brightonfestival.org)

#### Horse Show

Tickets are on sale now for Royal Windsor Horse Show, held on 14–18 May. See equestrian displays, show jumping and more, in the grounds of Windsor Castle. [www.rwhs.co.uk](http://www.rwhs.co.uk)

JUNE

#### The Epsom Derby

Get your panning skills ready to capture the action at Epsom Downs Racecourse on 7 June. [www.epsomderby.co.uk](http://www.epsomderby.co.uk)

#### Pride Festival, London

If you're looking to inject some colour into your portfolio, then London's LGBT event will give you what you're looking for. The exact dates to be confirmed. [londoncommunitypride.org](http://londoncommunitypride.org)

#### Shakespeare Festival

Stamford in Lincolnshire is host to a festival tribute to the Bard of Avon during June, July and August. Visit [www.stamfordshakespeare.co.uk](http://www.stamfordshakespeare.co.uk) for dates



## JULY

### Tour de France

**PROFESSIONAL** cycling photographer Graham Watson writes: Established in 1903, the Tour de France has become one of the ultimate tests of endurance for professional cyclists. While recent controversies have eaten up the headlines, it has done nothing to dull the excitement still generated by this annual event. The race consists of 21-stage segments covering 2,000 miles of circuit. Most of the stages take place in, of course, France, but since the 1960s the stages have opened up to include neighbouring countries. The 2014 event takes place from 5-27 July and includes our own shores, with Leeds/Harrogate acting as host for stage 1, York/Sheffield stage 2 and Cambridge/London stage 3.

Cycling is a fast sport, but there's a lot more to it than just a bloke on a bike – it is the atmosphere that needs capturing too. With the right lens and

from the right position, the action shots are relatively easy to capture. It's the 'creative' shots that take time and practice to get right, such as panning at lower shutter speeds, using fill-in flash, or shooting with a wideangle lens while lying on the ground.



© GRAHAM WATSON

Technically, keep your photography simple and don't try to do too much: opt for a camera and lens combination you know that works, and which lets you concentrate on the subject matter.

Because of the crowds expected in Yorkshire, be prepared to work

with a wideangle lens if you want to get close-up shots of the cyclists, or step away with a longer lens and gain a vantage point if you want to capture the 'bigger' image. Locations like Hebden Bridge and Holme Moss look like the best bets to capture this imagery. But don't think you're going to be able to move around the countryside, as the Tour will lock down its roads, plus many of the roads surrounding the route, so choose one or two places per day. Access to the finish areas is limited to the Tour's photographers, so go for a vantage point out on the course one day, then some close-up action the next. For stage three, Cambridge's canals and London's monuments offer a unique attraction for a sporting event.

If I am unfamiliar with a stage, I'll study a map, match it with the 'official' Tour map and hill profiles, and try to do a recce a few days before the race starts. From this, I'll discover whether my priority is to shoot the action on a steep cobbled hill, to capture the mass of public that congregates at such an event or even the finish sprint.

For more details visit [www.letour.com](http://www.letour.com).

## AUGUST

### Notting Hill Carnival

**EVERY** August Bank Holiday weekend, the streets of Notting Hill in London come alive with the city's biggest street festival. Colour is the order of the day, with extravagantly costumed performers, marching bands and enormous floats wending their way through the capital as part of a spectacular parade.

Originating in 1964 as a descendant of Caribbean carnivals that date back to the early 19th century, Notting Hill Carnival has endured and grown as a way for Afro-Caribbean communities to celebrate their heritage and traditions.

The carnival stretches over two

days. Sunday (24th) is Children's Day, with a shorter parade route and prizes awarded for the best costumes. Bank Holiday Monday (25th) is when the main parade happens, and the parties continue into the night for those with the stamina.

The carnival is legendary for its street food, with stalls serving up delicious traditional Caribbean cuisine such as jerk chicken and rum punch. The owners should be only too happy to let you get some mouth-watering shots of their cooking. The other big tradition is music, with ensemble steel-pan bands and calypso music on offer.

Notting Hill Carnival is a busy, bustling time, attracting around 2.5 million visitors to see the 50,000 performers. While those performers are always amenable to posing for a shot, why not use it as a chance to



© ABDUL KASSIM

practise shooting from the hip for some candid reactions?

The carnival will be held on 24-25 August 2014. The organisers

recommend using public transport, but be aware that a number of Tube stations will also be closed. Visit [www.thenottinghillcarnival.com](http://www.thenottinghillcarnival.com) for details.

<p><b>Latitude Festival</b> If you fancy trying your hand at capturing some live music alongside colourful characters and countless events, then head to Latitude on 17-20 July in Suffolk. <a href="http://www.latitudefestival.com">www.latitudefestival.com</a></p>	<p><b>Test Match cricket</b> Capture the action at Lord's Cricket Ground as England face India in the Investec Test, starting on 17 July. You can take photos, so long as they are not used commercially. <a href="http://www.lords.org">www.lords.org</a></p>	<p><b>Swifts</b> Swift migration begins in late July and early August, so this is your last chance to photograph these intriguing birds in the UK. <a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>The Fringe Festival</b> Edinburgh is a beautiful city, and the Festival Fringe, from 1-25 August, only makes it more spectacular. The Royal Mile is where the action happens. <a href="http://www.edfringe.com">www.edfringe.com</a></p>	<p><b>Cowes Week</b> The largest sailing regatta in the world, Cowes Week is held from 2-9 August from Cowes in the Isle of Wight, with up to 40 daily races. Spectating is free. <a href="http://www.aamcowesweek.co.uk">www.aamcowesweek.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Bog snorkelling</b> Over the August bank holiday (23-25), head to Llanwrtyd Wells in Powys to see grown men and women leap into a peat bog and go bog snorkelling. <a href="http://www.llanwrtyd.org.uk">www.llanwrtyd.org.uk</a></p>





## SEPTEMBER

### Open House London

**THIS** September, London will be throwing open its doors again for the annual Open House event. For one September weekend, more than 800 buildings around the London area will be freely open for the public to explore, cameras at the ready.

Open House London has been running since 1992 as a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to raising public awareness of London's buildings, opening up spectacular designs to people who may not otherwise get the chance to see them. It is a fantastic opportunity for architectural photographers to capture unique perspectives of some of London's iconic buildings, novel views of the city's skyline and even glimpses into private homes that have won awards for their design.

There's also a chance to get a look at the city's infrastructure, from flood-risk management at the Thames Barrier to water waste management. New developments and transformation schemes will be on



© PENNY & PHASAU

display, giving visitors a glimpse at the London of the future. There are also fun events on offer, such as a night-time charity hike through the capital.

The event has many supporters in the photographic community, such as Lomography and The Photographer's Gallery. A photographic competition runs throughout, encouraging visitors to submit creative shots to the Open House Flickr group. Separate categories for amateurs, professionals and under-11s ensure that everyone has a fair shot.

The main event runs from 20-21 September 2014 and is free to attend. Visit [openhouselondon.org.uk](http://openhouselondon.org.uk) for more information and to download a guide to next year's event.

## OCTOBER

### The deer rut

**PROFESSIONAL** wildlife photographer George Wheelhouse writes: Deer are a popular subject for wildlife photography, and it isn't difficult to see why. There's something endearingly graceful and utterly photographic about their shape, movement and interaction with the landscape.

The deer's mating season is a key event in the wildlife calendar, taking place from the end of September to November. Stags compete for access to hinds (female deer) by engaging in elaborate displays of dominance.

For most of the year the deer will be separated out by gender. As September arrives, those groups begin to fragment and get smaller. By the end of September, most males will have separated and start to wander around on their own and bellow their distinctive calls across the landscape. They'll also scent-mark, wallow in mud and pick up ferns with their antlers.

At a certain point they'll go after the females and try to gather a harem, which can sometimes consist of as

many as 20 deer. The male will then spend the next few weeks trying to protect his territory, mate with the females and fend off other males. That's when you'll see stags fighting.

I always try to include background and the surrounding environment in my images, to give them some degree of narrative. The landscape is like a stage. You have strong, atmospheric light and autumn colours to play with.

I shoot with a Nikon D800 and usually a 300mm f/2.8 lens. You don't need a huge lens – anything from 200mm up will do. I should also say that because of their size and their mood during the rutting season, the deer are all caught up in hormones so you don't want to get too close.

One of my favourite locations to photograph deer is Woburn Abbey Deer Park in Bedfordshire. There are also a couple of great locations in London, such as Richmond Park. Then there are some great spots further north, such as Chatsworth in Derbyshire. You'll also find locations in Exmoor in the West Country and some fantastic areas in the Scottish Highlands. However, I'd suggest sticking to deer parks for now. The deer are rather more habituated to people, which means you can get within a reasonable distance.



© GEORGE WHEELHOUSE



SEPTEMBER

### Blackpool Illuminations

This famous light-show spectacle runs throughout September. More than a million bulbs create the stunning show, powered by renewable resources. [www.blackpool-illuminations.net](http://www.blackpool-illuminations.net)



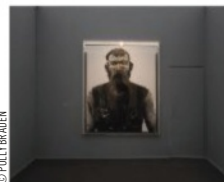
### Ludlow Food Festival

From 12-14 September, see and photograph some spectacular dishes as Ludlow in Shropshire transforms itself into an exhibition of gastronomy. [www.foodfestival.co.uk](http://www.foodfestival.co.uk)



### Windsor Festival

The Windsor Festival of art and literature on 15-28 September also offers a great range of walking tours around the beautiful city and beyond. [www.windsorfestival.com](http://www.windsorfestival.com)



© POLLY BRADEN

OCTOBER

### Frieze Art Fair

The UK's biggest art fair (16-19 October) is a great place to find out what's hot on the photography market, and also a good way of spotting up-and-coming talent. [friezelondon.com](http://friezelondon.com)



### Illuminating York

The annual Illuminating York festival attracts more than 50,000 visitors a year and in 2014 will be held from 19 October-1 November. [illuminatingyork.org.uk](http://illuminatingyork.org.uk)



© RSPB

### It's a Dog's Life

Take your camera and dog for a guided walk along the Mersehead RSPB reserve on 15 October to see the bird life. [www.rspb.org.uk/events/details.aspx?id=tcn:9-358236](http://www.rspb.org.uk/events/details.aspx?id=tcn:9-358236)





## DECEMBER

### Hogmanay

**WITH** 80,000 revellers from around the world heading to the heart of Edinburgh to welcome in the New Year, Hogmanay in Scotland is sure to provide lots of shooting opportunities. This year's events include a concert in West Princes Street Gardens with music and fireworks, a torchlight procession and candlelit concert, as well as the UK's largest outdoor New Year ceilidh.

With all this happening after the sun has set, you're going to need to make sure your camera is set up to capture great low-light photos. You might want to avoid a tripod as the streets will be very busy, so instead invest in a Gorillapod or use any seat benches or walls for support. Boost the ISO on your camera to 800 and select a shutter speed at which you can shoot handheld. You might want to opt for a zoom lens, to avoid having to change optics and to cut down on the kit you'll need to carry with you.

Visit [www.edinburghshogmanay.org](http://www.edinburghshogmanay.org).



## NOVEMBER

### Astronomy

**BY THE** time November rolls around, the nights are drawing in. But with the evenings getting darker and mornings getting later, there's no better time to point your camera up at the night sky and photograph the stars.

You don't need huge quantities of expensive gear to capture great images of the stars. David Clapp offered some tips for the best ways to shoot the night sky with kit you have at home, or with just a few cheap additions, back in AP 20 April. A wide-aperture prime lens will be your best friend in gathering as much light as possible, as will a camera that will perform well at high ISOs.

As you'll be working with long exposures a tripod is a must, as is a cable release to avoid any camera shake when firing the shutter. When using wideangle lenses, David recommends a shutter speed of around 8secs to ensure the stars show as pinpricks rather than lines. For capturing specific celestial subjects, David says to keep your focal length to a minimum of 24mm so they don't get lost in the maelstrom.

Celestial calendars are available online listing astronomical events happening month by month. On



around 17 November 2014, for example, the Leonid Meteor Shower is expected to be visible in the northern hemisphere. City dwellers will want to make a trip further afield, as urban light pollution often makes seeing the stars impossible.

The above images are from this year's Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition. You can see these, and others, at the Astronomy Photographer of the Year exhibition now showing at Royal Museum Greenwich, running until 23 February. The 2014 competition opens on 16 January. For details, visit [www.rmg.co.uk](http://www.rmg.co.uk).

					
<p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p><b>Guy Fawkes Night</b> Remember, remember, the 5th of November. Pick up your copy of AP 26 October for everything you need to know about how to photograph fireworks.</p>	<p><b>Somerset Carnivals</b> The Somerset Carnivals travel from Bridgwater to Glastonbury throughout November. Capture spectacular shows and the enormous illuminated carts. <a href="http://www.somersetcarnivals.co.uk">www.somersetcarnivals.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Winter Wonderland</b> Ice rinks, circuses, rides and a giant observation wheel are all part of Hyde Park's famous Christmas-themed Winter Wonderland. <a href="http://www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com">www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com</a></p>	<p><b>Christmas markets</b> Wherever you live in the UK, you will find Christmas markets and activities that are ripe for photography. Check out your local council website or visit <a href="http://www.christmasmarkets.com">www.christmasmarkets.com</a></p>	<p><b>New Year's Eve</b> Get your tripod out and set up in your back garden or at an organised event, as no matter where you are, the sky will be alight with fireworks at midnight! <a href="http://www.visitbritain.com">www.visitbritain.com</a></p>	<p><b>Geminids Meteors</b> No matter what astro event you're shooting, you're best to get away from light pollution and use a tripod and long shutter speed for best results. <a href="http://stardate.org/nightsky/meteors">stardate.org/nightsky/meteors</a></p>



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## Mike Shields Conwy

Mike says he loves everything about photography. 'I love the capture and the editing,' he says. 'I love looking for and finding a scene to capture for ever. I love viewing the images on the computer and realising I've caught a beautiful moment in time.' Mike was a film photographer many years ago, and rediscovered the bug in 2011 when he bought a Nikon D3100. His favourite subjects are landscapes, seascapes and long exposures. To see more of his images, visit [www.mikeshieldsphotography.com](http://www.mikeshieldsphotography.com).

### Two cottages

1 Mike used five bracketed exposures to create this dramatic HDR image

Nikon D7100, 18-200mm, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 250, tripod

### Vertigo

2 The leading lines of the columns and stairway draw the viewer into this dizzying shot

Nikon D5100, 10-20mm, 1/8sec at f/4, ISO 800



### Arches

3 Light and shadow play perfectly against each other to create the spooky, ghostly effect of this image

Nikon D5100, 10-20mm, 1/10sec at f/4, ISO 800

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CHOICE**

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This is a great example of how and when to use black & white. The mono treatment draws attention to the lines, structures and contrasts, removing any distractions. A pleasing interior shot indeed –  
*Debbi Allen*  
deputy editor





## Kiran Babla Essex

Computer animation student Kiran was first introduced to photography when a friend showed him what an SLR camera could do compared to his phone camera. Kiran says he loves the memories that pictures hold, and the way that looking at them allows him to be 'transported' back to the time and place they were captured. To see more from Kiran, find him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bablaphotography](http://www.facebook.com/bablaphotography).



### Stars over Queenstown

**1** Kiran says the biggest challenge with this image was manually focusing correctly, which took several attempts  
Canon EOS 550D, 11-18mm, 30secs at f/2.8, ISO 400, tripod



### Big Ben over water

**2** The 5sec exposure softens the water without completely eliminating detail, making for a peaceful night scene  
Canon EOS 550D, 18-55mm, 5secs at f/9, ISO 125, remote release

### Hangzhou West Lake

**3** The boat feels as though it is gently riding the thirds line, as it sits perfectly in the shot  
Canon EOS 550D, 11-18mm, 1/500sec at f/4, ISO 100

### Beijing Street Market

**4** A fast prime lens is a street photographer's best friend, as this challenging situation demonstrates  
Canon EOS 550D, 50mm, 1/60sec at f/1.8, ISO 100, tripod







4





### Paint-bow

**1** Aaron took the images on this page during an afternoon spent on farmland with paint pots and a friend with his shotgun

Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/3200sec at f/5.6, ISO 3200, tripod, cable release

### Brown paint

**2** This image is a testament to the effectiveness of a well-judged crop

Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/3200sec at f/5.6, ISO 3200, tripod, cable release



## Aaron Boast Suffolk

Aaron has always had a keen interest in photography, thanks to his experience studying video at college, and has spent much of his spare time experimenting with a bridge camera. When he was given the opportunity to incorporate photography into his work, he was able to step up to a Canon

EOS 7D. Aaron enjoys landscape shots, as well as taking photos of his 18-month-old daughter. 'I love capturing the moment and I love seeing a scene and thinking, "I would love a picture of that,"' he says. Currently on a photography course, Aaron hopes to continue to progress in the future.

### Pink paint

**3** Aaron used the Canon EOS 7D's continuous high-speed shutter to ensure that he didn't miss the perfect frame

Canon EOS 7D, 15-85mm, 1/6400sec at f/5, tripod, cable release

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# AP Appraisal



Expert advice, help and tips from Chris Gatcum

Original



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[www.manfrotto.co.uk](http://www.manfrotto.co.uk)

## Busker Matt Wilkes

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm at 24mm, 1/60sec at f/4, ISO 1250

**IT WOULD** be easy to walk past the subject of this shot, so the fact that Matt has chosen to take a photograph shows a certain degree of bravery. It's certainly paid off, as this shot of a busker in an underpass is full of atmosphere and deserves to be picture of the week.

Compositionally, it works really well. I particularly like the diagonal lines that converge at the right. There really is no substitute for strong diagonal lines in an image if you want to direct the viewer's gaze.

In this shot, the lines of the tunnel wall and floor effectively act like giant arrows, drawing the eye across the image, and Matt's use of a wideangle focal length has exaggerated this. However, the *direction* in which the lines lead us is equally important. Here we are being taken from left to right, which is the direction we read. As a result, the visual journey across the frame is comfortable and smooth.

The diagonals are helped by the fact that the eye is naturally drawn to lighter areas in an image, so we are more inclined to be drawn to the light at the end of the tunnel. If we reduce the image to basic tones, it becomes clear where the eye wants to go first – the bright patch of light at the right.

To demonstrate just how important these two elements are, compare Matt's original image to a reversed version and you can see that the diagonal lines don't work as well. If we try to follow the lines from left to right the lines start to diverge, effectively giving us two 'paths' to travel along, and we are also heading from light to dark, which isn't as natural. Alternatively, if we try to read the image from right to left, the visual journey is 'forced' as it is not the direction in which our eyes habitually travel.

The upshot is that Matt's original composition draws the eye quickly and smoothly from the left of the frame to the slightly blurred figures at the right. Although the busker is the subject of this photograph, our eyes naturally move away from him as we move briskly from one end of the tunnel to the other.



## Submit your pictures

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (please include the original files from the camera along with your submitted versions on your CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 3. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned



# AskAP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries



## GPS FAILURE

**Q** On a recent trip to China, I took two cameras with me – my Nikon D5000 with the GP-1 GPS device and a Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ30. It was rather annoying that the Lumix announced that 'GPS functionality is not available in this region,' but the Nikon was fine. I thought that the 'G' in GPS meant 'Global', but clearly this isn't the case. Why does the GP-1 work fine and the Lumix not? I'm looking to upgrade to the new Nikon D5300, but will its built-in GPS be as good as the GP-1? Is this one of those situations where I just have to buy it first and find out for myself?

**Richard Patrick**

**A** In fairness to Panasonic, the company states on several of its websites that 'GPS may not work in China or in the border regions of countries neighbouring China,' and the same information is repeated in the 'message displays' of the TZ30's manual. Indeed, according to an article written by Stefan Geens at [ogleearth.com/2012/05/why-do-panasonic-leica-fujifilm-samsung-and-nikon-censor-their-gps-cameras](http://ogleearth.com/2012/05/why-do-panasonic-leica-fujifilm-samsung-and-nikon-censor-their-gps-cameras), other camera manufacturers have similar systems in place.

Why this happens is simple: the Chinese government prohibits GPS use and doesn't want foreigners to record their location, claiming (among other things) that geo-tagging could be used to target military strikes against the country. While this is debatable, camera manufacturers with GPS-enabled cameras feel obliged to make

some sort of preventative gesture. If they don't deactivate GPS entirely, you may find that they record an inaccurate location, or there may simply be a general 'check before you travel' advisory in the manual.

In this instance, it would appear that Panasonic's cameras disable the GPS feature when they recognise you are in China or a surrounding 'disputed' area. While this might be inconvenient, it at least ensures that you can't be arrested, fined and/or jailed as a spy. Needless to say, the GPS functionality is restored as soon as you return to a 'safe' location.

As for your question regarding the D5300 vs the GP-1, then you're right, a head-to-head test is really the only way of knowing for sure. However, I would suspect that any differences won't be particularly significant.

**Chris Gatum**

## ASK...

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply email your questions to: [apanswers@ipcmedia.com](mailto:apanswers@ipcmedia.com), via twitter (@ap\_answers) or by post to: **Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**



## NIKON SOFTWARE SOLUTION

**A** Regarding the advice given by Robert Coombes and Chris Gatum (*Ask AP*, AP 2 November) about using Nikon film scanners with later versions of the Windows operating systems, I would like to suggest a further alternative. For many years I have used Windows XP to run Photoshop with various plug-ins, as well as scanners, including the Nikon Super Coolscan 9000 ED. Last year I upgraded my operating system to Windows 8, only to discover that Nikon no longer supports its film scanners with updated software. The alternative suggested was SilverFast Ai Studio 8 software, which was compatible with my scanner, but at a cost of £415 (which I felt was a big ask). I therefore reverted to using Windows XP, but recently discovered that newer versions of editing software, such as DxO Optics Pro 9, will only work on Windows Vista and later.

Speaking to one of the technical support staff at the university where I teach, it was suggested that I run a 'dual-boot' system on my computer – Windows XP for the Nikon scanner and other earlier versions of standalone software, and Windows 8 for Photoshop CS6 with recently updated plug-ins, plus other standalone software.

**Dr Patrick Shanahan**

## HELP WITH LENS PURCHASE



**Q** I have been offered a Canon 28-80mm f/2.8-4L lens for a very good price and am thinking of selling my existing lenses to pay for this. I currently have a Canon EF 35mm f/2, a Canon EF 50mm f/1.8 II and a Canon EF 85mm f/1.8 USM.

These focal ranges are almost all within the same range as the lens I want to get, so I was thinking that maybe the 28-80mm could work as an all-round lens instead of having the three I have already. Do you think this would work?

**kmflash**

**A** Having a single zoom lens instead of three primes would undoubtedly be more convenient. You would no longer need to change lenses, so you would always be ready to shoot. You would also be reducing the amount of dust reaching your sensor and minimising the risk of dropping a lens mid-change. You would have a slightly wider-angle option with the 28mm focal length and the ability



## AP GLOSSARY

# Dual-boot computer

The premise of a dual-boot computer is relatively simple: two operating systems are installed on a single computer, allowing you to choose which one you want to use when you boot up your machine. There are numerous permutations, but the most common are two versions of the same operating system, such as Windows XP and Windows 8, as mentioned by Dr Shanahan (see left), or two entirely different operating systems (a dual-boot Mac running Mac OS X and Windows, for example).

The benefit of having two versions of the same operating system (Windows XP/8, for example) is that you can run older software and hardware that is no longer supported by the manufacturer, as well as newer items that demand the most recent operating systems.

Alternatively, if you install Windows on a dual-boot Mac, you will be able to use both Windows and Mac software (not all programs are available for both systems).

The downside is that each operating system needs its own space on a hard drive, or even its own hard drive. It can also get complicated when it comes to setting up each operating system, especially if you're using two operating systems from different manufacturers (you shouldn't expect any Apple support if you're installing Windows on a Mac, for example).

For the truly adventurous, an extension of a dual-boot system is a multi-boot system, where three or more operating systems are installed on the same computer. Quad-boot Macs that have Mac OS, two versions of Windows and the Linux operating system installed on them are not unheard of!

to use 'in between' focal lengths rather than having to physically change your shooting position or shoot and crop later.

Yet despite all those benefits, my advice is simple: don't do it. The reason I say this is primarily because you're not swapping 'like for like'. Although Canon's 28-80mm is a great lens, so too are the primes you already have. They are also faster lenses – at the telephoto end of the zoom you would have a maximum aperture of f/4, whereas your current 85mm prime is f/1.8. This will make a huge difference when shooting in low light, but perhaps more importantly, the smaller maximum aperture on the zoom would restrict your creativity, as there wouldn't be the option to shoot wide open for an ultra-shallow depth of field, at least not to the same degree.

There are other practical considerations. The 28-80mm f/2.8-4L launched in April 1989, so the lens you're looking at could be 20-plus years old. Who knows how it has been treated in this time? Even if it's one of the later lenses to roll off the production line and has been treated with care, if something went wrong with its electronics you could be in trouble as some parts are no longer available. The focusing in particular would be a worry as even manual focusing is done electronically (turning the manual focus ring drives the focus motor). A simple fault here could effectively end the working life of the lens, as both automatic and manual focus rely at least partially on the same systems.

If your question had been 'I am thinking of getting a 28-80mm in addition to...', then I would say go for it (with the caveat that repairs may prove impossible), as it really is a great lens. However, as you are

instead planning on making it your only lens I would advise against it. If you really want an L-series zoom, then maybe look at Canon's 24-105mm f/4 instead. You will still be working with a smaller maximum aperture, but would be extending your focal-length range and using a lens that could be fixed should anything happen to it.

**Chris Gatcum**

**While a great lens, the Canon 28-80mm f/2.8-4L is more than 20 years old, so parts may not be available if something goes wrong with it**



**Panasonic**

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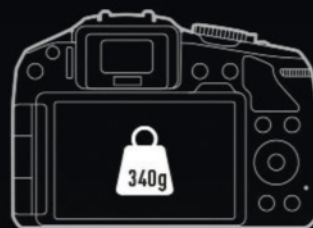
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\*Similarly priced DSLR vs. LUMIX G6, correct as at 14/06/13.



SIX OF THE BEST

# AP Testbench

Twice a month we test of six of the best **accessories** on the market. Here we take a look at mini ball heads

## Mini ball heads

From lightweight DSLRs to smartphones, more and more imaging devices can get by on smaller supports. **Jon Stapley** and **Callum McInerney-Riley** check out six of the best miniature ball heads



### Giottos MH7002-652 Series 1 Ball Head

Around £45

[www.giottos.com](http://www.giottos.com)

The largest of the ball heads on test, the Giottos MH7002-652 is something of a behemoth compared to the diminutive products from Gitzo (right) and Cullman (below). The extra space gives it a little room to pack in some extra features. Three separate spirit levels – two horizontal and one vertical – ensure accurate levelling of the camera. A single locking lever controls movement on all three axes, and once the wingnut-type thumb dial is unlocked the head can tilt and pan with ease.

Giottos' 652 plate comes on the top of the head, which has a spring-loaded, quick-release function for speedy access to the camera. The head attaches via a standard tripod thread, is solidly built and has a spring-loaded mechanism that returns the front dial to its optimal position. The Giottos head can support up to 4kg of kit.



### Cullman Cross CB2.7

Around £22

[www.cullmann.de](http://www.cullmann.de)

One important thing to note about the Cullman Cross CB2.7 is that it does not fit a standard tripod thread. It is designed to fit a 1/4-20 UNC screw thread, and does not come with a standard adapter. If this suits your needs, it's a great little product. It has one particularly interesting feature that's unique among these ball heads – the removable top-plate comes with a hotshoe on its reverse side. This lends the Cross CB2.7 a degree of versatility, allowing it to be used not only as a camera stand but also as a stand for accessories such as an external flash. Pleasingly, it functions very well in its primary capacity as a camera support. The movement is nice and fluid, and the rubberised thumb grip is easy to loosen and tighten. Be aware that it only supports a load of 1kg, so it should not be used with heavier kit.



### Manfrotto 492 Micro Ball Head

Around £29

[www.manfrotto.co.uk/492-micro-ball-head](http://www.manfrotto.co.uk/492-micro-ball-head)

Exceptional build quality is offered by the Manfrotto 492 Micro Ball Head, with the housing of the socket joint made from strong die-cast aluminium and the rest of the head constructed from a combination of aluminium and tough polycarbonate. At 140g, the Manfrotto ball head is the heaviest on test not to feature a quick-release plate.

However, if build quality is a priority, the extra weight is a worthy trade-off. In the size department, the Manfrotto 492 sits comfortable in the middle of all those on test – it is a similar size to the Velbon head.

A noteworthy feature of the Manfrotto 492 is the inclusion of a 1/4-20 UNC adapter, which screws inside the 3/8-16in tripod mounting thread so it can accept both.



FORTHCOMING  
TESTS

In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

**Panasonic Lumix DMC-GM1**

The GM1 is tiny, so how has Panasonic managed to cram a four thirds sensor inside its body? Callum McInerney-Riley finds out as he puts it to the test.

AP 4 January 2014

**Nikon 1 AW1**

Nikon has expanded its 1-series line-up with the AW1 – a fully waterproof interchangeable-lens camera. We find out how tough it really is.

AP 4 January 2014

**Nikon Df**

It's got retro style but bang up-to-date technology. We test this new 16.2-million-pixel DSLR.

AP 18 January 2014

**TESTBENCH:  
SIX OF THE BEST**

We put a selection of the best outdoor jackets for the photographer through their paces

AP 11 January 2014

**3 Legged Thing AirHed 0**

£120

[www.3leggedthing.com](http://www.3leggedthing.com)

The first thing that strikes you about the 3 Legged Thing AirHed 0 is the design, and especially the colour scheme, which makes you think a 12-year-old child somewhere won a competition. The second is the spec, which is, by contrast, seriously impressive. The AirHed 0 can support a whopping 30kg of kit despite its relatively slender dimensions of 81x44x32mm, which is amply more than any photo enthusiast is going to need. The fluidity of the head is exceptional, and the rubberised thumb grips – two for securing the ball itself, one for the Arca-Swiss-style plate – loosen and tighten with beautiful smoothness. A horizontal bubble level just below the plate helps you keep your horizons straight, and rubber grips on the top provide a little extra traction between plate and camera. It's a truly excellent head that just about justifies its high asking price.

**Gitzo G0077 Centre Ball Head**

Around £39

[www.gitzo.co.uk/centre-ball-head](http://www.gitzo.co.uk/centre-ball-head)

The Gitzo G0077 Centre Ball Head has an aluminium construction and, at a weight of just 80g it is the lightest on test. It's also the smallest – the main body of the ball head is no bigger than a 10p coin excluding the protrusion of the thumbscrew.

The circular plate on top has a standard screw thread on which to mount the camera. This ball head can comfortably hold most DSLRs as it's rated to a maximum payload of 2kg. The thumbscrew for adjusting the tension is well placed and can be repositioned to prevent it from interfering with either the camera body or the tripod/monopod. In a quarter of a turn, the head can be tensioned from its loosest to its tightest.

**Velbon QHD-33Q**

Around £34

[www.velbon.co.uk](http://www.velbon.co.uk)

Of all the ball heads with quick-release plates, the Velbon QHD-33Q is the smallest in size and the lightest at just 150g. The QB-3B quick-release plate comes included. This is a very small plate measuring just 31x43mm. It locks in place with an easy-to-use locking knob and is secured further by a pair of interlocking teeth featured on both the plate and the plate's housing. Like the Gitzo head, the thumb screw used to tension the ball head only takes a quarter of a turn, which makes it very quick and easy to position. However, the Velbon is rated to just 0.6kg, so it is more suited to small DSLRs or compact system cameras.

Both the camera-mount thread size and the tripod-mount thread size are 1/4-20 UNC screw thread, so an adapter may need to be bought separately.





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# Sony Alpha 7R

A full-frame CSC with a 36.4-million-pixel sensor – the **Sony Alpha 7R** promises much but does it deliver?

**Richard Sibley**  
Technical editor



**I FIRST** heard speculation that Sony was planning a full-frame compact system camera at the photokina trade show back in 2010. However, it was really only after the release earlier this year of the Cyber-shot DSC-RX1 – the world's first digital compact camera with a full 35mm-sized sensor – that the talk really started to hot up.

In its RX series, Sony has created a strong line-up of cameras that have exploited a gap in the market – and it is this philosophy of identifying niches that lies behind the Alpha 7 and 7R.

By placing a 35mm full-frame CMOS

sensor in a mirrorless compact system camera, Sony has created another world first. Of course, Leica has used full-frame sensors in its digital rangefinder cameras for some years, but the high price tag of the M-system cameras excludes many photographers. So Sony has not only fitted a full-frame sensor into a camera that is smaller and lighter than a Leica M-series digital rangefinder, but it has done so at a fraction of the cost. The Alpha 7 costs £1,350 body only, while the Alpha 7R is £1,700. These are not pocket-money prices, by any means, but a Leica M (Type 240) will set you back around £5,000, and that's before you have bought a lens for it.

Furthermore, the Alpha 7R isn't just the start of a new system. The short flange back distance of the E mount means that virtually every DSLR lens can be mounted on the camera via an adapter – even those coveted Leica lenses.

## AT A GLANCE

- 36.4-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- Sony Bionz X processor
- ISO 50-25,600
- Sony E mount
- NFC and Wi-Fi connectivity
- 2,359-million-dot EVF
- 3in, 921,600-dot LCD screen
- Around £1,699 body only

## FEATURES

Without doubt, it is the Alpha 7R's 36.4-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor that is going to make all the headlines. It is similar to that used in the Nikon D800, but Sony has developed a new 'gapless' design where there is no space between the micro-lenses. This is intended to draw more light into each photodiode, to reduce noise and improve low-light performance and dynamic range.

The gapless micro-lenses are placed at slight angles as they spread out towards the edges of the frame, the idea being to improve light gathering and sharpening of images at the very edges of the frame. Although the short 18mm back-focus distance of the E mount is one of its main selling points, the distance also means that light will be hitting the lens from very close range, which may cause an issue with distortions when using wideangle lenses.

Ensuring that the maximum possible resolution of the sensor is realised, the Alpha 7R does not have an anti-aliasing filter. I'll discuss the resolution of the camera in more detail later, but needless to say, the amount of detail that can be resolved from this combination is extremely impressive. Basically, Sony is offering the resolution of the Nikon D800E in a far smaller and lighter body, in a camera that is again cheaper than its Nikon counterpart.

For the first time, Sony is giving a designation to its Bionz processing





system, calling the processor in the Alpha 7 and 7R the Bionz X. It is about three times as fast as the previous Bionz system, and it allows the camera to have a sensitivity range of ISO 50–25,600. One thing that isn't fast, however, is the shooting rate, which is only 1.5fps. This can be increased to 4fps if the camera's AF and metering are switched off between shots, which would be acceptable in some situations such as shooting in a studio environment, using a small lens aperture. Given that the Alpha 7R isn't really designed with sports and wildlife photographers in mind, the shooting rate shouldn't be particularly restrictive, especially for landscape, travel and even studio photographers.

Like most new cameras, the Alpha 7R has built-in Wi-Fi and NFC (Near Field Communication) to allow remote shooting and image transfer to a smartphone or tablet, via the Sony Play Memories mobile app. Also like most recent cameras, the Alpha 7R can be charged via Micro USB – or, as Sony brands it, the Multi Function Port. As I discussed in my test of the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX10 (AP 7 December), this is extremely useful for charging on the go. Of course, a conventional charger is included in the box.

9/10

### BUILD AND HANDLING

The Alpha 7R could be described as functional rather than stylish. That doesn't mean it's an ugly camera, but it does lack the retro charm of, say, the Olympus OM-D EM-1. As some have commented on our forum ([www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/forum](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/forum)), the magnesium-alloy body of the Alpha 7R looks a little like the Cyber-shot DSC-RX1 with an additional pentaprism-style hump for the electronic viewfinder and a handgrip – and they aren't far wrong.

**Petit Piton, St Lucia, shot with the Canon EF 24mm f/2.8 lens and a Metabones adapter. The pull-up image shows just how sharp corner definition can be**



The camera is comfortable to hold, and the 28–70mm f/3.5–5.6mm kit lens is a good size to accompany the camera. The combination is also very light, making it ideal to take travelling. I certainly didn't feel the effects of carrying around the Alpha 7R, the kit lens and a few wide and standard optics in a small shoulder bag for an entire day.

While out shooting with the Alpha 7R I got caught in rain showers quite a few times, but the camera suffered no ill effects. The body is weather and dust-sealed, and although Sony makes no commitment in defining exactly how much water resistance the Alpha 7R has, the camera and kit lens can certainly be used

## FEATURES IN USE LENS COMPATIBILITY

**ALTHOUGH** the Alpha 7R is compatible with all existing Sony E-mount lenses, these lenses are designed for APS-C-sized sensors and have a smaller imaging circle. As such, the Alpha 7R will automatically crop the image to a lower 16-million-pixel resolution when they are used, in much the same way that APS-C-format DSLR lenses are cropped when used on a full-frame model.

With such a short back-focus distance, theoretically nearly all 35mm SLR lenses can be fitted to and used on the camera via an appropriate mount adapter. During my test I used a standard third-party E-mount adapter by SRB Griturn ([www.srb-griturn.co.uk](http://www.srb-griturn.co.uk)) to use a manual-focus Nikon 50mm f/1.4 lens on the Alpha 7R and found that it worked very well. With focus peaking and

manual focus area magnification, it was possible to manually focus this old lens quite quickly.

Another option is to use a Metabones Canon-mount Smart Adapter, which has electronic communication between the camera and lens to allow the Alpha 7R to autofocus with Canon lenses. I tried the adapter with a Canon EF 24mm f/2.8 lens and found that the lens did indeed autofocus, although it was quite slow.

Those with Sony A-mount lenses for Alpha DSLR and SLT cameras can also use these via the LA-EA3 and LA-EA4 adapters. The adapters maintain autofocus with the lenses, and the LA-EA4 also has a built-in phase-detection SLT mirror system so the speed on autofocus is roughly the same as when using a Sony SLT model.





in reasonably rainy conditions.

With a straightforward button layout and design, the Alpha 7R doesn't throw up any surprises. On the top-plate are a mode dial, shutter button, exposure compensation dial and a custom button, with the power switch jutting out from in front of the shutter button. There are front and rear control dials, giving the camera the feel of a DSLR, while on the rear is a standard button arrangement. As with other recent Sony cameras, there are a number of different customisable buttons on the Alpha 7R, so you can really tailor its controls to your own needs.

The only thing that I feel would improve the handling would be a touchscreen. While I don't like using them for changing menu settings, I do find they are extremely useful for quickly selecting the AF point. At present, it can be a little time-consuming to shift AF points, especially with so many available in manual-selection mode. A touchscreen would make the process far easier, as it does in other cameras.

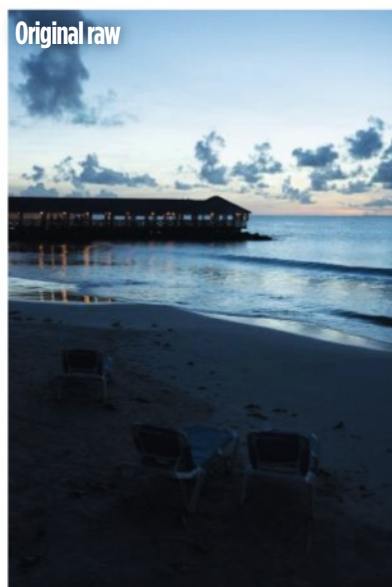
9/10

#### DYNAMIC RANGE

The Alpha 7R has a moderate dynamic range of 12.2EV at ISO 100, which is understandable given the pixel density of the sensor. With 36.4 million photosites on the surface of the sensor, each one will receive less light than a comparable 24, 16 or 12-million-pixel, full-frame sensor. As a result, the dynamic range will always be less, although that is not to say it is poor. Raw files can be edited to around +2EV exposure before luminance and colour noise become too much of an issue, and there is usually plenty of detail that can be revealed in shadows. Similar is true for highlight areas.

8/10

**'Only a handful of cameras have outresolved our resolution chart, and the Alpha 7R can be added to that list'**



#### NOISE RESOLUTION AND SENSITIVITY

There have been only a handful of cameras that have completely outresolved our resolution chart. Although the recent Pentax K-3 and Nikon D5300 came very close, only the Nikon D800 and D800E DSLRs, along with the Pentax 645 and Hasselblad H4D-40 medium-format cameras, have done it with ease. The Alpha 7R can now be added to that list. All the lines at the end of



**Above: This edited raw image shows that detail can be recovered from dark shadows**

**Below: This image of a sunrise was taken with a 3sec exposure**



the chart are clearly visible, and they remain so until the very highest sensitivities are reached, even in JPEG files.

Noise is reasonably well controlled. There are some signs of luminance in raw and JPEG files at ISO 800, but this isn't an issue unless you are looking at images at 100%. By ISO 1600 there is a little more luminance noise, and colour noise is visible in shadow areas on JPEGs. This is easily removed when editing raw images and, again, the resolution means that even when making reasonably large prints it shouldn't prove to be detrimental.

One thing that could be improved is the JPEG processing. The intelligent noise reduction and associated sharpening that analyses the scene and edits the image accordingly can look a little artificial when viewed at 100%. At lower magnifications it isn't really visible. I would prefer a slightly more universal colour noise and luminance noise reduction for an even finish.

As photographers have discovered with the D800, and more notably the D800E, it is vital that images are focused precisely and camera shake is reduced as much as possible. Obviously, the camera shake is often no different than when using any other camera, but the high resolution does magnify the situation when looking at images at 100%. However, this didn't mean that I couldn't take extremely sharp images handheld. It is important to shoot at a suitable shutter speed, even with image stabilisation. I found that I generally shot around 1EV faster than I would normally have to with a DSLR and a



lower resolution. Again, the key is to learn how to use the camera to get the best from it.

With any new line of cameras, the lens line-up is important. I had the opportunity to try the FE 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS lens, which is the kit lens for the Alpha 7, the Zeiss Sonnar T\* FE 35mm f/2.8 ZA and Zeiss Sonnar T\* FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA lenses. The fixed lenses are extremely sharp in the centre, with some slight fall-off in sharpness towards the edges of the frame with the 35mm lens. However, the 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 lens is disappointing. It shows a sudden and significant drop-off in sharpness at the edges of the frame at the 28mm setting.

I also used a Canon 24mm f/2.8 lens, via a Metabones adapter, and found the lens to be very good at the corners, with images looking full of detail and very sharp. However, the lens is designed for the longer flange back of the Canon EF mount. To manufacture a very good wideangle lens, smaller lenses may have to be sacrificed for larger wideangle lenses that produce sharper results. I am eagerly awaiting the Zeiss Vario-Tessar T\* FE 24-70mm f/4 ZA OSS lens to see how well it works with the Alpha 7 cameras. The lens is due out shortly and we hope to test it early next year. A macro, wideangle and another wide-aperture prime lens are also due for release towards the middle of 2014.

**28/30**

## METERING

The metering of the Alpha 7R performs as expected. When in evaluative metering mode, the camera assesses the whole scene and produces a print-ready image. This does mean that there is some blown-out highlight detail in JPEGs, although the raw files have a higher tolerance. With a dedicated exposure compensation dial included, adjusting the exposure is simple, but the Alpha 7R has a few other features.

In the camera's menu system is the somewhat curiously named Zebra feature. Primarily aimed at videographers, Zebra mode displays moving white & black stripes across areas of the image that have blown-out highlight detail, making it easy to spot areas that are overexposed.

Of course, spot and centreweighted metering are also on hand for more precise metering tasks.

**8/10**

## WHITE BALANCE AND COLOUR

There is not a lot to report regarding the white balance of the Alpha 7R. Auto white balance works well, producing a reasonably neutral white balance. At times, skies do look a little cyan on the rear screen, but the images are still on the right side of blue.

As for the colours themselves, they are almost identical to what we have seen on other recent Sony cameras. The vivid mode isn't too garish, and the black & white mode has a good level of contrast. One mode that I

# Facts & figures

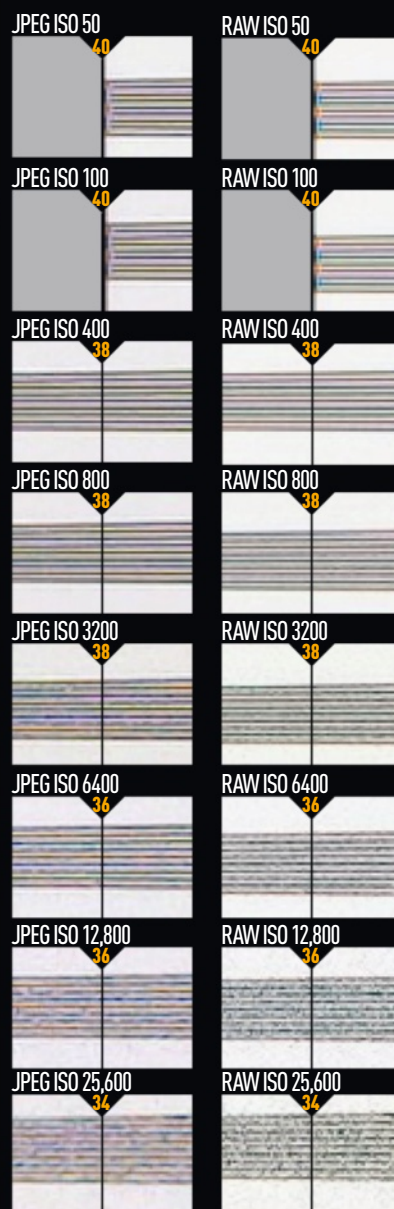


RRP	£1,699 body only
Sensor	Full-frame, 36.4-million-effective-pixel, CMOS sensor
Output size	7360 x 4912 pixels
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	Sony E mount
File format	Raw, JPEG, raw + JPEG simultaneously
Compression	3-stage JPEG
Colour space	Adobe RGB, sRGB
Shutter type	Electronically controlled focal-plane shutter
Shutter speeds	30-1/8000sec in 1/3EV steps plus bulb
Max flash sync	1/160sec
ISO	ISO 100-25,600 (extended to ISO 50)
Exposure modes	Auto, PASM, 10 scene modes, sweep panorama
Metering system	1,200-zone evaluative metering, centreweighted and fixed centre spot
Exposure comp	±5EV (±3EV using exposure compensation dial) in 1/3EV or 1/2EV steps
White balance	Auto, 10 presets, Kelvin, plus custom
White balance bracket	Yes, 3 images over 15 steps
Drive mode	1.5fps continuous, 4fps speed priority, single, timer, remote, bracketing
LCD	3in LCD with 921,600 dots, tilted and articulated
Viewfinder type	2.359-million-dot XGA OLED EVF
Field of view	Approx 100%
Dioptr adjustment	-4 to +3 dioptre,
Focusing modes	Single-shot AF, continuous AF, direct manual focus, manual focus, face detection, focus peaking
AF points	Contrast detection, multi-point (25 points), centre spot or manual selectable spot covering entire frame
DoF preview	Yes
Built-in flash	No
Video	AVCHD: 1920 x 1080 pixels (at 50fps or 25fps PAL); MP4: 1440 x 1080 pixels (25fps PAL); VGA: 640 x 480 pixels (at 25fps)
External mic	Yes
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC or Memory Stick Pro Duo
Power	Rechargeable Li-Ion NP-FP-W50 battery
Connectivity	Micro USB 2.0, Wi-Fi, NFC, HDMI, separate 3.5mm headphone and microphone jack
Weight	407g body only
Dimensions	126.9 x 94.4 x 48.2mm

**Sony**, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey  
KT13 0XW. Tel: 01932 816 000. Website: [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

## RESOLUTION & NOISE

These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured using the Carl Zeiss 35mm f/2.8 lens set to f/5.6. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution is at the specified sensitivity setting.





## FOCAL POINTS

### Wi-Fi remote control

Remote control of the camera is possible via one of the Sony Play Memories camera apps, which is tucked away in the Application menu. However, it is possible to add a shortcut to the application menu via a custom button.

### Flash

The Alpha 7R has no built-in flash, but has a multi-interface hotshoe that is compatible with the latest range of Sony flashguns.

### HDMI

Raw video footage can be output via the HDMI cable, so the uncompressed video can be saved to an external hard-disk recorder.

### Battery

The Alpha 7R uses a standard NP-FW50 battery that has previously been used in all NEX cameras.



### Fn button

In playback mode, this button pulls up the menu to allow an image to be sent via Wi-Fi from the camera to a tablet or smartphone.

### Battery life

Sony rates the battery at around 340 shots with the LCD screen, but only 270 shots when using the viewfinder. I found that in practice the battery life was a little less, but I was reviewing the images and transferring via Wi-Fi. While I managed almost a full day's shooting with the Alpha 7R, I would suggest that if you take a lot of images or like to reviewing images on the go, a second battery would be a good investment.

### Zebra

The Zebra setting can also be adjusted so that it displays detail over a certain amount. For example, set to 100 or higher, any blown-out detail is shown; set it to 80, and anything over 80% brightness will show the zebra pattern.

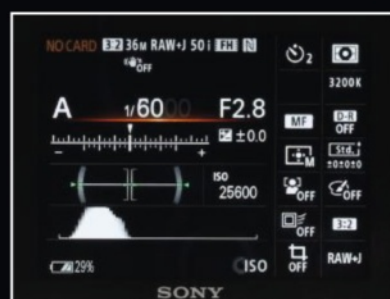
### Cable remote control

The Sony RM-VPR1 remote-release control can be plugged into the multi-port/Micro USB terminal on the side of the camera.

### Custom white balance



### Shooting settings



### Live view with settings







The Alpha 7R is great for travel and street photography, although the shutter is loud

particularly appreciated at this time of year was the autumn mode. It makes reds, oranges, browns and yellows look really rich.

8/10

#### AUTOFOCUS

Unlike the Alpha 7, which has on-sensor phase-detection autofocus, the Alpha 7R uses contrast-detection AF. As with the recent entry-level Alpha 3000, contrast-detection AF is very fast and snappy, particularly when using the fixed lenses. In low light the AF is a little slower, but still usable. There are a total of 25 contrast-detection AF points in automatic selection modes, and it is also possible to manually choose any area of the screen to focus on, with three different sizes of AF point.

Those wanting to use their existing Alpha-mount lenses via the LA-EA4 adapter will be pleased to know that focusing is almost as quick as when using a Sony Alpha 99. I used the 85mm f/1.4 lens, which focused fast enough for documentary and portrait images, although it lacked the snap of the 70-200mm f/2.8, which has an SSM lens.



The in-camera black & white mode produces images with a nice contrast

The Sony Alpha 7R is good enough for most situations, except sports or wildlife. If you are planning to take any sports or wildlife shots, you really need the LA-EA4 adapter and an SSM lens. The Alpha 7R is not really designed for these types of subjects, but it is nice to know you have the option if you already own existing lenses.

8/10

#### VIEWFINDER, LCD, LIVE VIEW AND VIDEO

Looking through the 2.359-million-dot electronic viewfinder, it would be easy to forget you are looking at a digital display were it not for the various settings that the EVF shows. The refresh rate of the screen is high enough that the viewfinder keeps up when panning or tracking, and it is great to be able to see the exact exposure of the image, and even preview the image just taken, without taking your eye away from the viewfinder. There is also a dual-axis level display so you can make sure your horizons are straight. Overall, it is an impressive EVF.

The 3in screen is of a similar high quality to the viewfinder, with a 921,600-dot resolution. It is generally bright and clear, although in the extreme sunlight of St Lucia, where I conducted this test, I did find myself having to turn the screen up to almost its maximum brightness when reviewing images. That said, the EVF can also be used to preview images, as well as for shooting, so bright sunlight should present no real problems. The articulation of the screen also proved useful when shooting low-angle images of the sun rising over a beach.

Small and lightweight with a full-frame sensor, the Alpha 7R should also prove popular with videographers. With various adapters available, and features such as focus peaking and Zebra highlight monitoring, it is possible to use a range of lenses and ensure that video footage is metered properly.

The Alpha 7R includes both external microphone and headphone sockets.

9/10

## Competition



Olympus OM-D E-M1

TESTED AP 2 NOVEMBER 2013



Nikon D800

TESTED AP 28 APRIL 2012

**WITH** its slight retro style, it is natural to compare the Alpha 7R to the Olympus OM-D E-M1, but they are very different cameras. The Alpha 7R has a sensor that is twice the size and has more than double the number of pixels than the EM-1. However, the bodies of the two cameras are similar in size, although the weather sealing of the EM-1 is better.

As far as DSLRs go, the Nikon D800 is the natural competitor. Both cameras share roughly the same resolution sensor and outresolved our resolution chart, producing superbly detailed images. Sony's NEX-7 will also provide some competition with its 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized sensor.

## Verdict

**TAKING** a high-resolution sensor and putting it in a small and lightweight camera body is certainly a recipe for success, and there are no CSCs that can currently match the resolution of the Alpha 7R. The nearest is Sony's own NEX-7 and even that is a long way short. In terms of noise control, raw images only show a hint of luminance noise, and images taken at between ISO 50 and 1600 are perfectly usable. Even at higher ISO sensitivities, images can be downsampled to 16 million pixels to reduce noise, so that it is on a par with, if not far better than, its competitors.

The only question is with the lens line-up. We will have to wait and see how good the new lenses will be, but in the meantime third-party DSLR optics work perfectly well. I'm sure that many DSLR users will find the Alpha 7R a very intriguing prospect, not to mention users of Leica rangefinder film cameras, who have a reasonably affordable camera on which to use their lenses. The price is a key factor: the Alpha 7R is within reach of many, and is even more affordable than the Nikon D800, which is itself reasonable.

Overall, the Alpha 7R promises to be yet another hit for Sony. It is certainly one of the best cameras I have tested this year. It may even be *the best*.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Amateur Photographer</b>										
Tested as an Advanced CSC										
Rated Very good										
<b>87%</b>										
FEATURES	9/10									
BUILD/HANDLING	9/10									
NOISE/RESOLUTION	28/30									
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10									
AWB/COLOUR	8/10									
METERING	8/10									
AUTOFOCUS	8/10									
LCD/VIEWFINDER	9/10									



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# Nikon D5300

With a 24.2-million-pixel-sensor, a new Expeed 4 processor, Wi-Fi and GPS functionality, has **Nikon** done enough to make the **D5300** stand out from previous models?

**Callum McInerney-Riley**  
Technical writer



**WHEN** the D5300 was launched in October, Nikon was keen to stress that it was not a replacement for the Nikon D5200 or D5100. Rather, it was a continuation of the D5000 series, so neither the D5200 nor the D5100 would be discontinued.

This new camera therefore expands Nikon's range of 'entry-level' DSLRs, sitting at the top of the line-up as a 'high-end' model. With a variety of special effects modes, it ticks all the right boxes for the creative enthusiast photographer and boasts some impressive specifications. Also, thanks to the fact there's no anti-aliasing filter, and that it has similarly high-resolution DX-format sensor as the D5200, the D5300 has the potential to produce fantastically detailed images. In addition, the D5300 has built-in Wi-Fi, GPS and features a new Expeed 4 processor.

## FEATURES

The D5300 has a 15.6x23.5mm, DX-format sensor with a resolution of 24.2 million pixels, which is fractionally higher than the 24.1 million pixels of the D5200. Thanks to the removal of the micro-blurring optical low-pass (anti-aliasing) filter, the D5300 should be able to resolve a higher level of detail than the previous Nikon D5000-series models. The lack of an anti-aliasing filter does mean, though, that there is a risk of moiré patterning on images. This usually occurs when photographing recurring patterns, such as the ones found on textiles, but it can be largely removed in post-production. Nikon was keen to stress that removing the anti-aliasing filter is a worthwhile trade-off to improve the overall image resolution.

Every new D5000-series camera so far has come with an upgraded processor, and the D5300 has the new Expeed 4 image-processing engine. This allows the same 5fps shooting speed as that offered by the D5200 but the new processor should allow quicker and more accurate calculations from the 1616-pixel RGB sensor. In turn, this

should achieve better colour rendition. Also, the Expeed 4 processor should improve the noise performance throughout the ISO sensitivity range.

The Nikon D5200 saw the introduction of Wi-Fi compatibility via two additional extras – a WU-1a Wi-Fi module and a GP-1 GPS module, which cost around £250 combined. Thankfully, the D5300 has both Wi-Fi and GPS built in, so users can geotag images, send pictures to a smartphone/tablet and even wirelessly control the camera from a smart device via the free Nikon WMU app.

As well as the night vision, colour sketch, miniature, selective colour, silhouette, high key and low key effects, the D5300 includes two further special effects modes in the form of toy camera and HDR painting.

**9/10**

## BUILD AND HANDLING

While the D5200's body has a polycarbonate exoskeleton that is based around a metal chassis, the D5300 body is a 'monocoque' design. This involves using a single shell made of carbon-fibre-reinforced plastic without the metal chassis, which cuts down on weight while maintaining durability. As a result, the D5300 weighs just 480g and has dimensions of 125x98x76mm, which is 25g lighter than the D5200 and a few millimetres smaller in width and height. The depth is unchanged, so the handgrip is still chunky and comfortable. I found that even with large lenses the D5300 felt well balanced in my hand.

The camera has minimal buttons and the layout is very simple. By hitting a button marked '?', users can access the shooting menu on the LCD, which can handle most controls users are

## AT A GLANCE

- 24.2-million-pixel, DX-format CMOS sensor
- New Expeed 4 image-processing engine
- ISO 100-12,800 (expandable to ISO 25,600)
- 39-point Multi-CAM 4800DX AF sensor with nine cross-type points
- No anti-aliasing filter
- New EN-EL14a battery with 20% power increase over the EN-EL14
- Street price around £749 with 18-55mm kit lens



**'The menus are very easy to navigate and have optional tips should users not understand a setting'**

likely to need. I found myself using this for the majority of situations, although it was too slow for quick adjustment of the ISO. For this reason, I opted to set the custom function button located near the lens mount to access the ISO adjustment.

The menus are very easy to navigate and have optional tips should users not understand a setting. In general, the system is ideal for 'entry-level' enthusiast photographers.

8/10

## METERING

As mentioned previously, the D5300 has a very capable 2016-pixel metering sensor. In evaluative metering the camera consistently achieved an accurate exposure even when faced with tricky high-contrast scenes. Of course, it's not infallible, because on occasions areas of highlight detail became burnt out, so I dialled down the exposure compensation to optimise detail for post-production. Also, when using spot metering on a very bright background, some images were a little overexposed. However, for the most part, the camera is extremely accurate.

8/10

## DYNAMIC RANGE

For general shooting, the D5300's DX-format sensor, coupled with the very accurate metering, achieves a great dynamic range. At ISO 100, the camera produced a dynamic range of 12.35 stops of light. Used in 'normal' conditions, I found that the D5300 rarely lost detail in either the highlight or shadow areas. However, when shooting in more challenging situations where the dynamic range would be expected to struggle – such as very bright conditions – detail does start to be lost.

As the metering tends to cause highlight detail to be lost before shadow detail, I shot at -1EV when faced with challenging scenes. I noticed in both raw and JPEG files that a large amount of tonal detail is retained in shadows and highlights. Using Adobe Lightroom or Adobe Photoshop, I was able to lighten the shadows and darken the highlight areas down to achieve a more tonally rich image. Also, an in-camera retouch menu allows users to brighten shadow areas by adjusting the active D-lighting.

8/10

## AUTOFOCUS

The Nikon D5300 has the same Multi-CAM 4800DX AF sensor with 39 points,

# Facts & figures

RRP	£799.99 (with 18-55mm kit lens)
Sensor	24.2-million-effective-pixel CMOS sensor
Output size	6000 x 4000 pixels
Focal length mag	1.5x
Lens mount	Nikon F mount (with AF contacts)
File format	14-bit raw, JPEG, raw + JPEG simultaneously
Compression	3-stage JPEG
Colour space	Adobe RGB, sRGB
Shutter type	Electronically controlled focal-plane shutter
Shutter speeds	30-1/4000sec in 1/3EV or 1/2EV steps plus bulb
Max flash sync	1/200sec
ISO	ISO 100-12800 (Hi mode 25,600)
Exposure modes	Auto, program, aperture priority, shutter priority, manual, 9 special effects modes, 17 scene modes and 5 presets
Metering system	2016-pixel RGB metering sensor with 3D Color Matrix metering (evaluative), centreweighted and spot
Exposure comp	±5EV in 1/3EV steps
White balance	Auto, 6 presets (with fine-tuning), plus custom setting
White balance bracket	3 shots in steps of one
Drive mode	Single, continuous high at 5fps, continuous low at 3fps, self-timer, remote, quiet
LCD	Articulated 3.2in LCD with 1.037 million dots
Viewfinder type	Pentamirror
Field of view	0.82x magnification
Dioptr adjustment	-1.7 to +1.0 dioptre
Focusing modes	Manual, single-shot AF, 9 points, 21 points or 39 points dynamic AF, automatic AF, 3D tracking
AF points	39 or 11 focus points, individually selectable AF points
DoF preview	Yes
Built-in flash	Yes – GN 13m @ ISO 100
Video	1920 x 1080 pixels (at 60i, 30, 25 or 24p), 1280 x 720 pixels (at 60 or 50fps), 640 x 424 pixels (at 30 or 25fps), MOV files with MPEG-4 AVC/H.264 compression
Memory card	SD and UHS-I compliant SDHC/SDXC
Power	Rechargeable Li-Ion EN-EL14a battery
Connectivity	USB 2.0 Hi-Speed, HDMI, 3.5mm stereo jack, accessory terminal
Weight	530g approx, including battery and card
Dimensions	125x 98 x 76mm

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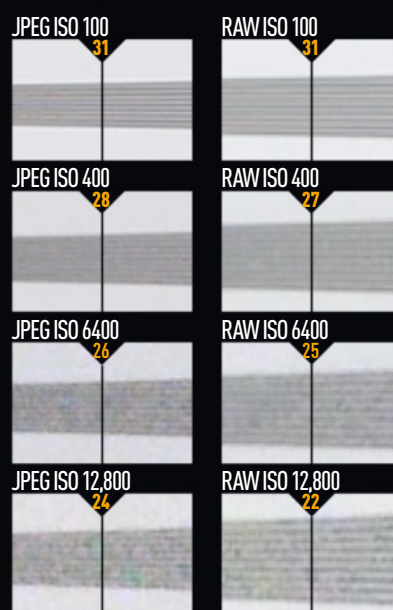
including nine cross-type points, as that found in the D5200. I found that when focusing in situations with lots of available light, the camera took just a fraction of a second to lock. Even in low-light situations, the D5300 usually took well under 1sec to achieve focus and rarely did it hunt or miss focus. Also in low light, close-range focusing is aided by the AF assist beam. However, due to the size of the body, larger lenses and/or lens hoods will obstruct the AF assist beam from illuminating the scene.

8/10



## RESOLUTION AND NOISE CONTROL

These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured using the Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro lens. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution at the specified sensitivity setting.



## NOISE, RESOLUTION AND SENSITIVITY

Nikon claims that with the new Expeed 4 processor noise reduction is equivalent to 1 f-stop. For this reason, the native ISO range has been extended to ISO 100–12,800, with Hi1 equivalent to ISO 25,600.

At ISO 100 the Nikon D5200's raw file scored 30 on our resolution chart. The D5300 pushes this impressive score even further, scoring 31 at ISO 100, while also making improvements upon the D5200 performance in higher ISO sensitivity settings. Typically this was +1 or

Using Wi-Fi, I was able to send shots directly to a tablet and edit in Adobe Photoshop Touch. I got the most from the dynamic range by boosting the shadows





This image was taken at ISO 3200 and it is a crop of approximately 40% of the original. The noise is very well controlled and not detracting from the image

tonally rich images that are among the best in its class.

8/10

### VIEWFINDER, LIVE VIEW, LCD AND VIDEO

Like many entry-level DSLRs, the Nikon D5300 uses a pentamirror system inside the viewfinder. This has been redesigned to allow the viewfinder to achieve 0.82x magnification in comparison to the 0.78x magnification of the D5200 and D5100.

Both the resolution and size of the LCD screen have been increased on the D5300. It is a 1.073-million-dot Vari-angle LCD as opposed to the 912,000 dots of previous models. I found it has great colour reproduction and a high refresh rate, while the viewing angle is good even in bright sunny conditions. The screen is fully articulated, which is an advantage in bright conditions.

Video can be filmed at 1920x1080 pixels at frame rates of 60p, 50p, 30p, 25p, 24p and lower-resolution formats. A microphone is built into the top-plate next to the hotshoe, which delivers crisp sound quality to videos.

8/10

+2 on our resolution score.

The Nikkor AF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens is OK, but it fails to unlock the true potential of the camera. Better-quality glass would improve things significantly. I shot some images using a Nikon 24-70mm f/2.8 lens and saw a vast improvement in quality.

Pictures taken from ISO 100-400 are noise-free unless pixel peeping. At ISO 800 some luminescence noise appears in dense shadow areas, but overall it's well controlled. Images up to 3200 are usable. Previewing in full screen mode on a 24in screen, luminescent noise is only evident at ISO 6400 and above. At this ISO detail begins to smudge, with JPEGs being particularly affected. I was able to get more detail from a processed raw file.

28/30

### WHITE BALANCE AND COLOUR

Many of the standard white-balance settings are present on the Nikon D5300. These include incandescent, direct sunlight, flash, cloudy, shade, custom preset and fluorescent lighting with seven variants. When selecting one of these presets, tapping on the D-pad will allow users to correct or alter the colour between green, amber, blue and magenta. This is great for adjusting the white balance quickly to suit the scene. Typically, I found it useful for correcting tungsten lighting by shifting the colour bias towards the blue area. Also, this can be used to tone the images. I found the automatic white-balance setting to be accurate for the most situations. Overall, I think the colour rendition is fantastic, constantly giving



## Verdict

**THERE** has been criticism levelled at the Nikon D5300 that its upgrades are too modest and they appear to be only a short jump from previous models. While this is in some ways true, I think Nikon has an already successful camera and added some worthy additions in areas that matter. For example, the new processor reduces noise and improves the standard ISO sensitivity range, allowing better low-light shooting than previous models. Also, the removal of the anti-aliasing filter has improved the resolution. These two features take the image quality to an even higher standard than previous models.

An easy-to-use Wi-Fi system and GPS capabilities add some very useful functionality to the camera, bringing it up to date. However, the app is very limited and doesn't allow full manual control when the camera is tethered to a smart device. In comparison to other DSLRs with remote shooting functionality, the D5300 is very difficult to use and restricted in its operation. However, the sharing part of the app works seamlessly.

The D5300 offers many scene modes and colour options for the creative photographer, as well as excellent colour rendition and dynamic range. Overall, Nikon is offering something to suit most users and I think this is exactly what is needed for a high-end entry-level DSLR.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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<b>85%</b>										
FEATURES	9/10									
BUILD/HANDLING	8/10									
NOISE/RESOLUTION	28/30									
DYNAMIC RANGE	8/10									
AWB/COLOUR	8/10									
METERING	8/10									
AUTOFOCUS	8/10									
LCD/VIEWFINDER	8/10									



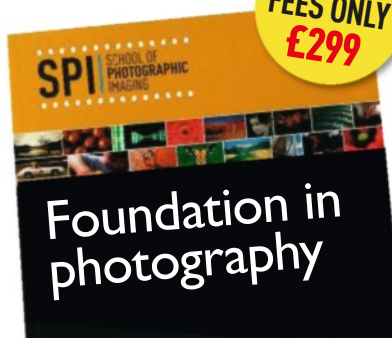
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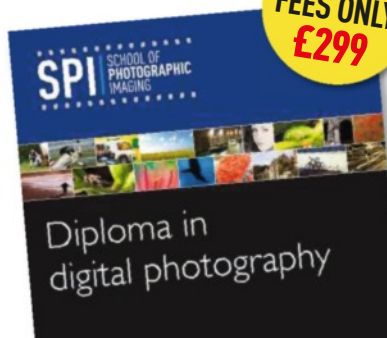
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Image corrections that previously were the domain of the optical designer can now be made in image-processing software. While an uncorrected image from the lens may show several optical problems, these may be resolved by digital processing

Professor  
Newman  
explains...

# Improving lenses with computers

Lens design is a process of balancing one aberration against the others to find a happy compromise. **Professor Bob Newman** discusses those aberrations that can be corrected digitally

**IN AP** 9 November, I looked at how magnification is split between 'optical' magnification, which occurs between the subject and sensor image, and is produced by the lens, and 'digital' magnification, which is achieved by the electronic signal processing applied after the image had been digitised. Here, we'll discuss another replacement of optical effect with a digital one – the correction of lens aberrations.

## LENSES AND IMAGE PROCESSING

A large part of the art of optical design is balancing aberrations against one another. Lens designers think in 'degrees of freedom' – factors in the design that can be altered to change the balance between the different lens aberrations. By using additional elements, 'rare-earth' glasses or aspheric surfaces, the number of degrees of freedom can be increased and a lens design with a

more precisely balanced performance can be produced. However, all these come at a cost, in money, size or weight.

Generally, digital correction costs very little in a camera already equipped with a powerful image processor, so several digital cameras use digital-image processing to correct the aberrations in the lenses. The payback is that the lens designers need fewer degrees of freedom, so they can make the lenses smaller, cheaper and lighter. The micro four thirds system includes provision for this kind of correction, and it is standard in many compact cameras. DxO Labs ([www.dxo.com](http://www.dxo.com)) also includes the facility for this kind of correction in some of its image-processing packages.

## LENS PROBLEMS AND COMPUTER CORRECTION

**Distortion:** Distortion can be defined as any straight lines in an image being rendered

as other than straight. Classically, there are two kinds of distortion: pincushion, in which straight lines towards the edge of the frame are bowed inwards; and barrel, in which they bow outwards. A fish-eye is an example of a lens with extreme barrel distortion. Modern lenses, particularly zooms, may have both kinds together, operational at different parts of the frame. This is sometimes known as 'moustache' distortion.

The correction of distortion requires remapping pixel values from where the lens has drawn them to the correct part of the frame. To do this, it is necessary to know beforehand the distortion in the lens. For a fixed-lens camera, the firmware may be preloaded with a description of the distortion – remembering that the distortion will be different for each zoom setting in a zoom lens and requiring a series of distortion maps. In an interchangeable-lens camera,





**BOB NEWMAN** originally trained as a physicist, and is now an engineer and computer scientist with a PhD in real-time systems design. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and has been responsible for innovative developments in graphics workstations, avionics, marine instruments and radar systems. Two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob has led research projects in design methodology, automotive technology and, more recently, sensing systems. He is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. Bob is a camera nut and has been a keen amateur photographer from the age of seven. He is delighted to be given the opportunity to apply his professional expertise to his hobby.

**Figure 1: Distortion is corrected simply by moving the pixel values in the distorted lines to where they should be, if the line had been straight. It requires knowledge of the exact amount of distortion and the shape of the distortion**



the camera either has to hold a description for each lens, which might be fitted, or the lens holds a description of its own distortion and transfers that to the camera when it is fitted. This requires the camera/lens protocol to be designed with this function in mind, as it has been in the micro four thirds system. In the case of an external processing package, the software can come with a distortion characterisation of a number of lenses. So long as the lens used is on that list, the software can automatically correct.

**Chromatic aberration:** There are two forms of chromatic aberration. The most often seen is lateral chromatic aberration. With this aberration, the effect is that the lens has different magnifications for different colours of light. It produces a characteristic coloured fringing at the edges of images. The solution in signal-processing terms is simply to separate the red, green and blue channels and resize them separately to the size that they should be. What makes this slightly more complex is that the difference



Fig 1

in magnification might be itself subject to distortion, so different corrections will be needed in different parts of the frame. In principle, the two processes of distortion correction and lateral chromatic aberration correction may be performed together, by separately correcting each of the red, blue and green channels. Once again, a complete lens characterisation is necessary.

The other kind of chromatic aberration is longitudinal chromatic aberration, in which the focal length of the lens changes with the colour of the light. This results in some of the images recorded in the separate colour channels being out of focus, and therefore needs a correction, which will focus defocused images. While, in theory, this is not impossible, in practice it is very difficult. It is discussed in the section on deconvolution (below). For this reason, longitudinal chromatic aberration is one of the more difficult lens faults, and one that lens designers will tend not to compromise. **Convolution and deconvolution:** In previous articles I have discussed the point

**‘There are two forms of chromatic aberration. The most often seen is lateral chromatic aberration’**

spread function or PSF, which is effectively the graph of the brightness over space of a single infinitely small point, as rendered by the lens. When translated into the ‘spatial frequency domain’ the PSF becomes the better-known Modulation Transfer Function or MTF, but for the purposes of this discussion it is easier to consider operation of a lens in terms of the PSF. The complete function of an optical system is described by the combination of the PSFs of every part of that system, combined together by a process called ‘convolution’. Convolution may be thought of as what happens when one graph is ‘passed across’ another, multiplying as it goes. That’s a little hard to visualise, but thankfully easy to compute – the computation is simply done in the spatial frequency domain, by multiplying MTFs (more strictly, Optical Transfer Functions or OTFs, which also take into account the spatial phase as well as frequency) together.

The consequence of viewing an optical system producing a set of convolved

**Figure 2: Lateral chromatic aberration is fixed by changing the magnification of red, green and blue sub-images so that they match**



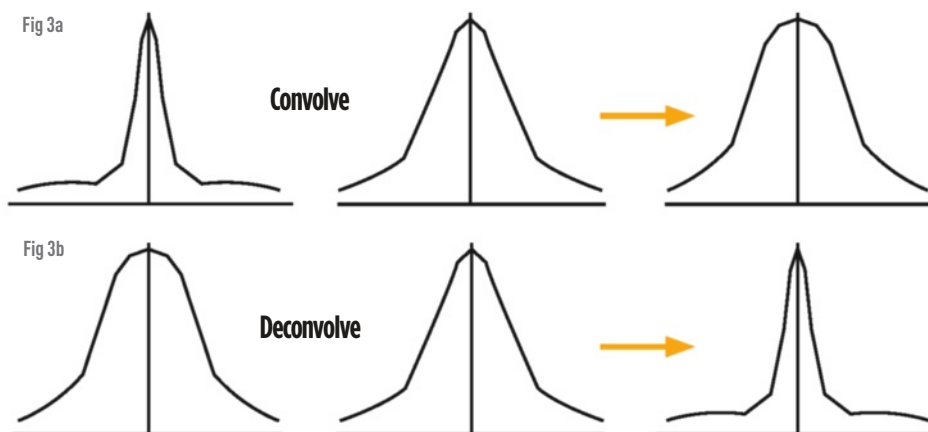
Fig 2

PSFs is that we can, in concept, separate the PSF of a real lens into the PSF of a perfect lens convolved with the PSF of a set of aberrations. Further, we can separate the aberration PSF into a set of PSFs for individual aberrations convolved together. The payoff is that it is possible mathematically to ‘deconvolve’ a known function – that is, perform the reverse of convolution for a known function. Thus, if

we know the PSF of an aberration we can deconvolve that PSF to restore the image to what it would have been without that aberration. In principle, deconvolution could be used to rid images of a whole number of problems, including out-of-focus effects and diffraction. If this sounds too good to be true, it’s because it is. Deconvolution suffers from many problems. For a start, if the aberration function used for deconvolution doesn’t match the real-life one precisely, deconvolution can actually introduce more aberrations than it solves.

**The downsides:** The second problem with deconvolution is common to all digital means of correcting lens problems – that some image degradation will occur due to the processing. For instance, deconvolution can mean stretching the local dynamic range of an image to achieve the correction, which will very likely result in a high degree of noise. Similarly, distortion correction depends on interpolation of image details to different parts of the image, which will quite likely result in a loss of definition.

**The upsides:** The upside of these digital-correction techniques is that they allow lenses to be made smaller, lighter and cheaper. Given that many modern digital cameras have a higher resolution and dynamic range than many photographers will use, it can make good sense to trade in some of these qualities for the advantage of compactness, weight and cost. **AP**



**Figure 3a: A perfect point source and the blur function convolve to produce the captured image**

**Figure 3b: If the blur function is known, it can be deconvolved with the captured image to produce the original point source**





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10-17mm F3.5-4.5 Fisheye £399  
12-24mm F4 Lens £739  
17-70mm F4 SDM £489  
18-135mm F3.5-5.6 DC WR £329  
18-270mm F3.5-6.3 SDM £449  
35mm F2.4 £149  
50mm F1.8 £119  
50mm F2.8 Macro £139  
50-200mm F4-5.6 WR £139  
55-300mm F4-5.8 £299  
100mm F2.8 WR Macro £579  
FA 31mm F1.8 Limited £1041  
FA 43mm F1.9 Limited £695  
FA 50mm F1.4 £289  
FA 77mm F1.8 Limited £791

### Canon

SD Mark III Body £2335  
7D Body £1099  
7D + 15-85mm IS USM Lens £1499  
7D + 18-135mm IS USM Lens £1279  
60D Body £619  
60D + 18-55mm IS Lens £699  
60D + 18-135mm IS USM Lens £829  
650D Body £529  
650D + 18-55mm IS Lens £569  
1100D Body £229  
1100D + 18-55mm IS Lens £299  
15-85mm IS USM Lens £499  
18-55mm IS USM Lens £89  
18-135mm IS USM Lens £229  
24-105mm IS USM Lens £649

### SIGMA

8-16/4.5-5.6 DC HSM £549  
10-20/4.5-6 EX DC HSM £399  
10-20/3.5 EX DC HSM £459  
105/2.8 EX Macro DG HSM OS £549  
120-400/4.5-5.6 APO OS £699  
12-24/4.5-5.6 II DG HSM £679  
120-300/2.8 EX DG OS HSM £2049  
150-500/5.6-6.3 APO DG OS £799  
17-50/2.8 EX DC OS HSM £559  
17-70/2.8-4.5 DC OS £349  
18-50/2.8-4.5 DC OS HSM £179  
18-125/3.5-5.6 DC OS £259  
18-250/3.5-5.6 DC HSM OS £399  
18-50/2.8 EX DG Macro £309  
24-70/2.8 IF EX DG HSM £599  
30/1.4 EX DC £379  
4.5/2.8 EX HSM Circular Fisheye £597  
50-150/2.8 EX DC Mx2 £565  
50-500/4.5-6.3 DG HSM OS £1249  
50/1.4 EX DG HSM £379  
50/2.8 Macro DG £269  
50-200/4.5-6.5 DC OS HSM £235  
70-200/2.8 EX APO DG £599  
70-200/2.8 EX DG OS HSM £899  
70-300/4.5-6.5 APO DG Macro £179  
70-300/4.5-6.5 DC OS Super DG £129  
70-300/4.5-6.5 DG OS £299  
70/2.8 EX Macro DG £369  
85.1.4 EX DG HSM £699  
EF 610 DG ST Flash £159  
EF 610 DG SUPER Flash £229

### OLYMPUS

9-18mm F4-5.6 Lens £479  
12mm F2 Lens £529  
15mm F8 Body Cap Lens £69  
17mm F1.8 Lens £369  
12-50mm F3.5-6.3 Lens £279  
14-150mm F4-5.6 Lens £299  
14-42mm F3.5-5.6 Lens £169  
40-150mm F4-5.6 MSC Lens £169  
45mm F1.8 Lens £219  
60mm F2.8 Macro Lens £369  
75mm F1.8 Lens £709  
75-300mm F4.8-6.7 II Lens £385



**IN STOCK**



**IN STOCK**

**Nikon**  
10-24/3.5-4.5 AF-S DX £639  
105/2.8G AF-S VR Macro £629  
12-24/4 AF-D DX £849  
14-24/2.8 £1315  
16-35/4G VR AF-S £829  
16-85/3.5-5.6 VR AF-S DX £439  
17-55/2.8 IF ED AF-S DX £1099  
18-105/3.5-5.6G AF-S VR £175  
18-200/3.5-5.6 VR II AF-S DX £589  
18-300/3.5-5.6 VR AF-S DX £679  
18-55/3.5-5.6G AF-S VR £119  
24/1.4G AF-S ED £1549  
24-70/2.8G AF-S ED £1245  
24-85/3.5-4.5G AF-S VR £429  
24-120/4G AF-S VR IF £819  
28-300/3.5-5.6G ED VR AF-S £669  
35/1.4G AF-S £1399  
35/1.8G AF-S £159  
40/2.8G Micro AF-S DX £199  
50/1.4G AF-S £279  
50/1.8 £114  
50/1.8G AF-S £159  
55-200/4.5-6.5G AF-S DX VR £169  
55-300/4.5-5.6G ED VR AF-S DX £325  
60/2.8 AF-S Micro £399  
70-200/2.8G ED VR II AF-S £1599  
70-300/4.5-5.6G AF-S VR £399  
85/1.4G AF-S £1199  
85/1.8G AF-S £379  
85/3.5G ED VR AF-S DX Micro £375  
SB 700 Flash £229  
SB 910 Flash £339



**From £729**



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**From £871**



**Call for availability**



**From £329**



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**From £841**



**FROM £749**



**FROM £749**



## Digital Photography

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CANON EOS 105 MK III COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS.	MINT-BOXED £1,695.00
CANON EOS 70 BODY WITH ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £595.00
CANON EOS 50 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS.	MINT-BOXED £495.00
CANON EOS 50 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	EXC++ £495.00
CANON EOS 300 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,990.00
CANON EOS 200 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,290.00
CANON EOS 400M BODY COMPLETE WITH ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,450.00
CANON EOS 4000 + GRIP WITH NI-CAD BATT + CHGR	EXC++ £1,750.00
CANON EOS 5000 + 18-55 LENS WITH 3 BATTERIES	EXC++-BOXED £2,450.00
CANON EOS 1000D BODY WITH CANON 18-55 LENS	MINT £1,750.00
CANON POWERSHOT G9 WITH ALL ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,650.00
CANON POWERSHOT G9 + BATTERY AND CHARGER	MINT- £1,550.00
CANON 380 EX SPEEDLIGHT	EXC++ £790.00
CANON 420 EX SPEEDLIGHT	MINT-BOXED £590.00
CANON 430 EX II SPEEDLITE MK II LATEST	MINT-BOXED £1,690.00
CANON 550 EX SPEEDLIGHT	MINT-BOXED £1,990.00
SIGMA EM-41 40 DG E-TTL MK II MACRO FLASH	MINT-BOXED £269.00
CANON BG-E1 BATT GRIP FOR EOS 300D	MINT-BOXED £35.00
CANON BG-E2 GRIP FOR EOS 20D/30D/40D	MINT £49.00
CANON BG-E3 BATT GRIP FOR EOS 350D/400D	MINT-BOXED £39.00
CANON BG-E4 BATT GRIP FOR EOS 5D etc	MINT-BOXED £39.00
CANON ST-E2 SPEEDLITE TRANSMITTER	MINT-BOXED £129.00
FLUJ 18mm 12 FUJINON FOR X MOUNT FLUJ	MINT-BOXED AS NEW £139.00
NIKON D700 BODY COMPLETE WITH ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,750.00
NIKON D700 BODY COMPLETE WITH ACCESSORIES	EXC++-BOXED £1,990.00
NIKON D7000 BODY COMP ONLY 453 ACTUATIONS	MINT-BOXED AS NEW £499.00
NIKON D3000 BODY KIT COMPLETE + ALL ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £399.00
NIKON D90 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £299.00
NIKON D200 BODY KIT COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £245.00
NIKON D3000 BODY COMPLETE WITH ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,490.00
NIKON D80 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,950.00
NIKON D80 BODY COMPLETE WITH ACCESS	EXC++ £1,650.00
NIKON D70 BODY WITH ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,650.00
NIKON D60 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESSORIES	MINT-BOXED £1,150.00
NIKON D40 BODY WITH NIKON 18-55 MM KIT + ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,790.00
NIKON DR-5 RIGHT ANGLED FINDER	MINT-BOXED £1,750.00
NIKON J1 COMPLETE WITH 10 - 30 LENS + CHARGER	MINT- £1,750.00
NIKON MB-D10 BATTERY GRIP FOR D3000/300S/700	MINT-BOXED £590.00
NIKON MB-D20 BATT GRIP FOR NIKON D200	MINT-BOXED £75.00
NIKON MB-D80 BATT GRIP FOR NIKON D80/D90	EXC++ £550.00
NIKON SB850 DX SPEEDLIGHT COMPLETE	MINT-BOXED £590.00
NIKON SB850 DX SPEEDLIGHT WITH MANUAL	MINT-BOXED £1,290.00
NIKON SB850 SPEEDLIGHT + CASE	MINT-CASED £1,750.00
NIKON SB700 SPEEDLIGHT	MINT-BOXED £1,690.00
NIKON SB600 SPEEDLIGHT	MINT-BOXED £1,590.00
SIGMA 140 DG MACRO FLASH TTL FLTR FOR NIKON	MINT-BOXED £245.00
SIGMA EF-530 DG ST ELECTRONIC FLASH FOR NIKON FIT	MINT-BOXED £275.00
NIKON SE 29 TTL REMOTE CORD	MINT £49.00
SIGMA 10-20mm 14/5.6 DC EX HSM FOR OLYMPUS 4/3rds	MINT-HOOD £289.00
OLYMPUS HD-5 BATTERY GRIP FOR E620 BODY	MINT £45.00
OLYMPUS 12 - 60mm 12.8/4 SWD ZUIKO DIG ED 4/3RDS	MINT-CASED £575.00
OLYMPUS 14 - 45mm 13.5/5.6 ZUIKO DIGITAL 4/3rds LENS	MINT-HOOD £99.00
OLYMPUS 14 - 42mm 13.5/5.6 MK II 1/8" MSC MICRO 4/3rds	MINT AS NEW £165.00
OLYMPUS 17mm 12.8 M ZUIKO MICRO FOUR THIRDS	MINT-BOXED £165.00
PANASONIC GXT1 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,690.00
PANASONIC GXT2 BODY COMPLETE WITH ALL ACCESS	MINT-BOXED £1,790.00
PANASONIC G1 BODY WITH 14 - 45 PANASONIC LENS	MINT-BOXED £1,990.00
PANASONIC 20mm f1.7 LUMIX G 4/3rds LENS	MINT-CASED £259.00
PANASONIC 14 - 45mm 13.5/5.6 LUMIX G OIS MICRO 4/3rds	MINT £1,750.00
PANASONIC 45 - 200mm 14/5.6 LUMIX VARIO MICRO 4/3rds	MINT-BOXED £1,690.00
PANASONIC 100 - 300mm 14/5.6 LUMIX G 4/3rds	MINT-BOXED £3,190.00
PENTAX Q BODY + PENTAX 5 - 15mm LENS AS NEW	MINT-BOXED £145.00
METZ 48 AF-1 FLASH UNIT FOR OLYMPUS/PANASONIC	MINT £249.00
SONY ALPHA 28 - 75mm 12.8 SAM LENS	MINT-BOXED £290.00
NIKON 18 - 200mm 13.5/5.6 DG SLD GLASS FOR SONY	MINT-BOXED £1,250.00
SONY ALPHA HWL-F56AM FLASH GUN	MINT-CASED £145.00

## Canon Autofocus, Digital Lenses, Canon FD

CANON EOS 1NRS BODY	MINT- £325.00
CANON EOS 1NRS	MINT-BOXED £1,990.00
CANON EOS 1 BODY	EXC++ £1,150.00
CANON EOS 3 BODY	EXC++ £1,250.00
CANON EOS 5 BODY	EXC++ £590.00
CANON 20 - 35mm 12.8 USM "L"	MINT- £575.00
CANON 24 - 70mm 12.8 USM "L" MK I + HOOD	MINT- £595.00
CANON 24 - 105mm 14 USM "L" IS - HOYA PRO FLT	MINT-BOXED £575.00
CANON 70 - 200mm 4 USM "L" IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT-BOXED £790.00
CANON 70 - 300mm 14/5.6 USM IMAGE STAR DO LENS	MINT-BOXED £590.00
CANON 100 - 400mm 14/5.6 USM "L" IMAGE STABILIZ	MINT-BOXED £995.00
CANON 180mm 13.5 USM "L" MACRO LENS	MINT-BOXED £845.00
CANON 300mm 4 USM "L" IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT-BOXED £890.00
CANON 40mm 12.8 STM LENS	MINT-BOXED £139.00
CANON 50mm f1.8 MKII	MINT-BOXED £69.00
CANON 60mm 12.8 EF-S USM MACRO	MINT-BOXED AS NEW £295.00
CANON 100mm f2.8 USM MACRO + HOYA UV FILTER	MINT £299.00
CANON 15 - 85mm 13.5/5.6 USM IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT-BOXED £495.00
CANON 17 - 55mm 12.8 USM IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT-BOXED £575.00
CANON 17 - 55mm 14/5.6 USM IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT £1,890.00
CANON 18 - 55mm 13.5/5.6 MK II	MINT £590.00
CANON 18 - 55mm 13.5/5.6 MK II IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT £990.00
CANON 20 - 35mm 13.5/4.5 USM	MINT £1,750.00
CANON 24 - 85mm 13.5/4.5 USM	MINT-BOXED £1,590.00
CANON 28 - 80mm 13.5/5.6 USM MK V	MINT £490.00
CANON 28 - 90mm 14/5.6 USM	MINT £690.00
CANON 28 - 105mm 13.5/4.5 USM	MINT £1,250.00
CANON 35 - 80mm 14/5.6 EF MK II	MINT £990.00
CANON 70 - 300mm 14/5.6 USM IMAGE STAR DO LENS	MINT-BOXED £590.00
CANON 70 - 300mm 14/5.6 USM IMAGE STABILIZER	MINT £2,990.00
CANON 75 - 300mm 14/5.6 + HOOD	MINT £890.00
CANON 75 - 300mm 14/5.6 MK II	MINT-BOXED £990.00
CANON 52mm CLOSE UP LENS TYPE 2500	MINT-BOXED £49.00
KENCO DG CANON FIT TUBE SET 12,20,36mm	MINT-BOXED £99.00
CANON EF 2.0x EXTENDER MK I	MINT-CASED £1,990.00
CANON EF 2.0x EXTENDER MK II	MINT-BOXED £2,390.00
KENCO TELEPLUS PRO 300 50X 1.4 TELECONVERTER	MINT-BOXED £1,590.00
KENCO TELEPLUS PRO 350X 2.0 TELECONVERTER	MINT-BOXED £1,590.00
TELEPLUS MK7 7 ELEMENT 2x TELECONVERTER	MINT- £690.00
CANON 540 EZ FLASH + INST.	MINT-BOXED £590.00
CANON 540 EZ FLASH + INST.	MINT- £590.00
CANON 420 EZ FLASH	MINT-CASED £390.00
CANON ST-E2 SPEEDLITE TRANSMITTER	MINT-BOXED £1,250.00

CANON ANGLE FINDER B	MINT-BOXED £79.00
CANON LC3 TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER	MINT £115.00
CANON PB-E1 BOOSTER FOR EOS 1/3 etc	MINT- £69.00
SIGMA 4.5mm 12.8 EX DC HSM CIRCULAR FISHEYE	MINT-CASED £490.00
SIGMA 8mm 13.5 EX DG FISHEYE SLD GLASS	MINT-BOXED AS NEW £445.00
SIGMA 10mm 12.8 EX DC FISHEYE HSM	MINT-BOXED £345.00
SIGMA 20mm 11.8 EF DG ASPHERIC RF (LATEST)	MINT-BOXED £325.00
SIGMA 20mm 11.8 EF DG ASPHERIC RF (LATEST)	MINT- £225.00
SIGMA 15mm 12.8 EX DC MACRO SUPERB SHARP LENS	MINT-BOXED £345.00
SIGMA 180mm 13.5 APO MACRO DG SUPERB LENS	MINT-BOXED £375.00
SIGMA 600mm R MIRROR LENS MC MACRO	EXC++ £395.00
SIGMA 12 - 24mm 14/5.6 EX DG HSM + HOOD	MINT-BOXED £345.00
SIGMA 12 - 24mm 14/5.6 EX DG HSM MKII LATEST	MINT-BOXED £419.00
SIGMA 20 - 40mm 12.8 EX ASPHERICAL DG	MINT-BOXED £245.00
SIGMA 24 - 70mm 12.8 EX DG MACRO + HOOD	MINT-BOXED £290.00
SIGMA 28 - 300mm 13.5/6.3 ZOOM MACRO	MINT-HOOD £790.00
SIGMA 70 - 300mm 14/5.6 APO MACRO + HOOD	MINT- £390.00
SIGMA 150 - 500mm 15/6.3 DG HSM OPTICAL STABILISER	MINT-CASED £625.00
SIGMA 170 - 500mm 15/6.3 APO COMP WITH HOOD	MINT-BOXED £395.00
TAMRON 90mm 12.8 SP A/F DI MACRO 1:1	MINT-BOXED £279.00
TAMRON 10 - 24mm 13.5/4.5 DI II LD AF SP ASPHERIC	MINT-BOXED £279.00
TAMRON 55 - 200mm 14/5.6 LD MACRO DI II	MINT-BOXED £65.00
TOKINA 10 - 17mm 13.5/4.5 AT-X DC LENS (LATEST)	MINT £345.00
CANON F1 AE BODY 1984 LOS ANGELES OLYMPIC ED	MINT-BOXED NEW £1,095.00
CANON AUTO BELLOW	MINT £95.00

## Contax G-Compacts & SLR & Ricoh

CONTAX G1 BODY	MINT- £190.00
CONTAX TVS TITANUM COMPACT ZOOM + CASE	MINT-BOXED £390.00
CONTAX TTX TITANUM COMPACT + LEATHER CASE	MINT-CASED £390.00
CONTAX 21mm 12.8 BIOGON "T" WITH FILTER & FINDER	MINT-CASED £695.00
CONTAX 28mm 12.8 BIOGON "T" + FLT & CONTAX HOOD/CAP MINT	CASED £295.00
CONTAX 90mm 12.8 SONNAR "G" + HOOD	MINT £190.00
CONTAX 90mm 12.8 SONNAR "G" + HOOD	MINT-BOXED £219.00
CONTAX TLA 140 FLASH FOR G1/G2	MINT-CASED £59.00
CONTAX TLA 200 FLASH FOR G1/G2	MINT-CASED £99.00
CONTAX G01 DATABASE COMP FOR CONTAX T3	MINT-BOXED £99.00
CONTAX SA-1 FLASH ADAPTOR	MINT £55.00
CONTAX TITANUM FILTERS, HOODS AND CAPS FOR G.	PHONE IN STOCK PHONE
CONTAX AX AUTOFOCUS BODY (RARE NOW)	MINT- £390.00
CONTAX ARIA BODY (STRAP, INSTRUCTIONS)	EXC++-BOXED £190.00
CONTAX FIT YASHICA 28mm 12.8 SUPERB CONDITION	MINT £65.00
CONTAX 28mm 12.8 DISTAGON "T" MM	MINT-BOXED £295.00
CONTAX 45mm 12.8 TESSAR "T" PANCAKE LENS + HOOD	MINT £225.00
CONTAX 50mm f1.4 MM	MINT-BOXED £295.00
CONTAX 50mm f1.7 PLANAR AE	MINT £145.00
CONTAX 85mm f1.4 PLANAR MM	MINT- £425.00
CONTAX 135mm f2.8 SONNAR "T" MM	EXC++-BOXED £195.00
CONTAX 35 - 70mm 13.4 VARIO SONAR	MINT-BOXED £295.00
CONTAX TLA 200 FLASH	MINT-BOXED £59.00
RICOH GR1 V DATE COMP + CASE & HOYA FILTER SET	MINT-BOXED £295.00

## Leica M, R & Screw & Binoculars

LEICA MM TTL BODY CHROME (VERY LITTLE USE)	MINT-BOXED £1,195.00
LEICA M4 P 70TH ANNIVERSARY 1913-1983	MINT-BOXED £1,495.00
LEICA M4 P BLACK BODY	MINT-BOXED £99.00
LEICA M5 S/W COMPLETE WITH CRB CASE	EXC++ £675.00
LEICA M4a BODY SER NO 12659XK CRGA 1970	MINT- £575.00
LEICA M4a BODY SER NO 1411XVCRGA 1975	EXC++ £645.00
LEICA III BODY SER NO 1816XK 1945 NEEDS SERVICE	EXC++ £1,790.00
LEICA III WITH SCRM 13.5 LENS	MINT- £575.00
LEICA CL BODY COMP WITH 40mm 12 SUMMICRON	MINT- £795.00
LEICA CL BODY	MINT- £495.00
MINOLTA CLE WITH 40mm 12 ROKOR	EXC++ £490.00
MINOLTA CLE BODY COMPLETE WITH CASE	EXC++ £490.00
LEICA STANDARD CHROME WITH CASE	EXC++ £290.00
LEICA FIT MINOLTA 35mm 14 ROKOR	MINT-CASED £295.00
LEICA 50mm 12.8 ELMAR M COLLAPSIBLE BLACK LACK	MINT- £525.00
LEICA 50mm 12.8 SUMMICRON BLACK 11819	MINT-BOXED £395.00
LEICA 50mm 12.8 SUMMICRON CHROME M	MINT-CASED £1,275.00
LEICA 90mm 12.5 SUMMARIT M 6 BIT LATEST + HOOD	MINT-BOXED £875.00
LEICA 90mm 14 COLL ELMAR M MOUNT	EXC++-IN KEPPER £145.00
LEICA 135mm 12.8 ELMARIT M WITH SPECS	EXC++ £275.00
LEICA 135mm 14.5 Hektor + HOOD M MOUNT	EXC++ £390.00
LEICA 135mm 14.5 Hektor IN KEPPER	EXC++ £145.00
LEICA 90mm 14 ELMAR BLACK SCREW	MINT- £195.00
LEICA 135mm 14.5 Hektor + HOOD S BODY	EXC++ £390.00
LEICA HANDGRIP FOR M4/M5 etc	EXC++-BOXED £145.00
LEICA WINDER MH-2 FOR M4 etc	MINT-BOXED £145.00
LEICA M4a 35 BODY CHROME	MINT-BOXED £290.00
LEICA 50mm 12.8 SUMMICRON R 3 CAM	EXC++ £290.00
LEICA 180mm 14 ELMARIT R 3 CAM	EXC++ £345.00
LEICA 70 - 210mm 14 COLL ELMAR R	EXC++ £390.00
ANGENIEUX 70 - 200mm 13.5 FOR Leica R FIT	MINT-BOXED £775.00
LEICA MOTORWINDER AND STRAP FOR R6 etc	MINT-BOXED £145.00
MINOX 10 x 25 BR COMPACT BINOCULARS + CASE	MINT £90.00
ZEISS 6x28 B MONOCULAR WITH CASE	MINT-CASED £125.00
SWAROVSKI 8 x 50 SLC "B" BINOCULARS WITH CASE	MINT-BOXED £690.00

## Medium & Large Format

BRONICA ETRSI COMP WITH 120 BACK, 75mm & WLF	MINT- £245.00
BRONICA ETRS BODY + 120 BACK, LENS & WLF + GRIP	EXC++ £169.00
BRONICA ETRS COMPLETE WITH 75mm ELN + 120 BACK	EXC++ £175.00
BRONICA RF 45mm 14 ZENZANON FOR 645 R/F + FINDER	MINT-CASED £390.00
BRONICA 40mm 14 ZENZANON MC	EXC++ £125.00
BRONICA 50mm 12.8 ZENZANON MC	EXC++ £190.00
BRONICA 150mm 13.5 ZENZANON PE	MINT-BOXED £1,250.00
BRONICA 150mm 13.5 ZENZANON E MC	MINT-BOXED £990.00
BRONICA 150mm 14 PS ZENZANON E MC	MINT £990.00
BRONICA 150mm F4 E	MINT-BOXED £290.00
BRONICA ETRS 120 BACK	MINT- £790.00
BRONICA ETRS/ETRS POLAROID BACK	MINT £690.00
BRONICA AEI METERED PRISM	MINT £690.00
BRONICA PLAIN PRISM FOR ETRS/ETRS	MINT-CASED £690.00
BRONICA MOTOR WINDER E	EXC++ £890.00
BRONICA 150mm 13.5 ZENZANON S	MINT- £1,650.00
BRONICA 50mm 14 ZENZANON PS FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £145.00
BRONICA 110mm 14 PS ZENZANON MACRO FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £395.00
BRONICA 150mm 14 PS ZENZANON FOR SQ	MINT-CASED £1,450.00
BRONICA SQA 120 MAGAZINE BACK	EXC++ £45.00
BRONICA SQA/IN POLAROID MAGAZINE BACK	MINT-BOXED £690.00
BRONICA 135W BACK FOR SQ VERY RARE	EXC++ £1,650.00
FLUJ 645 WIDE S PROFESSIONAL WIDE 60	MINT-CASED £395.00
FLUJ 670 MK III C/90mm 13.5 LENS	MINT-BOXED £675.00

MAMIYA 43mm 14.5 WITH FINDER & HOOD FOR 7/7II	MINT-BOXED £790.00
MAMIYA 150mm 14.5 WITH HOOD FOR 7/7II	MINT-BOXED £395.00
MAMIYA 150mm 14.5 + HOOD FOR MAMIYA 7/7II	MINT £425.00
MAMIYA 180mm 14.5 SEKOR Z W FOR RZ	MINT £1,190.00
MAMIYA 250mm 14.5 LENS FOR RZ	MINT- £1,950.00
MAMIYA 150mm 13.5 A/F FOR 645 A/F	MINT £290.00
MAMIYA 210mm 14 SEKOR C FOR 645	MINT-CASED £1,950.00
MAMIYA 180mm 14.5 SEKOR FOR RB	MINT £1,690.00
MAMIYA RZ 67 PRO BACK	MINT- £675.00
MAMIYA 220 BACK FOR RZ 67	MINT £395.00
PENTAX 55mm 13.5 TAKUMAR SMC FOR 6x7	MINT- £295.00
PENTAX 55mm 12.8 FOR PENTAX 645	MINT-BOXED £1,295.00
PENTAX 200mm F4 FOR PENTAX 67 + FILTER AND HOOD	MINT- £2,250.00
ROLLEIFLEX 6008 PRO + 80mm HFT LENS	MINT- £695.00
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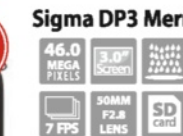
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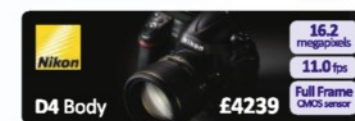
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1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA464...£99	Ext tube NA465...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA465...£99	Ext tube NA466...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K1 body...£199	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA466...£99	Ext tube NA467...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA467...£99	Ext tube NA468...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K1 body...£199	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA468...£99	Ext tube NA469...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA469...£99	Ext tube NA470...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K1 body...£199	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA470...£99	Ext tube NA471...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA471...£99	Ext tube NA472...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K1 body...£199	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA472...£99	Ext tube NA473...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA473...£99	Ext tube NA474...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K1 body...£199	
1DX MKIII body box...£749	TOK 17-35 F4 Pro FX...£249	Ext tube NA474...£99	Ext tube NA475...£99	100XPROB...£89	28 F2.8 AF M...£119	K2 body...£249	
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46mm	£4.99
49mm	£4.99
52mm	£4.99
55mm	£5.99
58mm	£6.99
62mm	£7.99
67mm	£8.99
72mm	£9.99
77mm	£11.99
82mm	£14.99
86mm	£19.99

**Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multicoated Clear Protection Filters**

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49mm	£10.99
52mm	£10.99
55mm	£11.99
58mm	£12.99
62mm	£14.99
67mm	£15.99
72mm	£17.99
77mm	£19.99
82mm	£22.99

**Hoya HMC Slim Frame Multicoated UV Filters**

37mm	£12.99
46mm	£12.99
52mm	£11.99
58mm	£14.99
62mm	£16.99
67mm	£18.99
72mm	£21.99
77mm	£25.99
82mm	£29.99

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52mm	£13.99
58mm	£15.99
62mm	£17.99
67mm	£19.99
72mm	£21.99
77mm	£24.99

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52mm	£27.99
58mm	£32.99
62mm	£35.99
67mm	£39.99
72mm	£44.99
77mm SPECIAL	£39.99
82mm	£56.99

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52mm	£31.99
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62mm	£39.99
67mm	£44.99
72mm	£49.99
77mm	£54.99
82mm	£69.99

**KOOD Close Up Filter Sets (+1, +2 & +4)**

52mm	£26.99
58mm	£34.99

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### KOOD P-Type Filter System

The P-Type square/rectangular filter system consists of three parts:

- 1) An adapter ring that screws onto the front of your lens
- 2) A filter holder clips onto the ring
- 3) One or more P-Type (84mm wide) filters

**KOOD square filters are manufactured in the UK, and are fully compatible with the Cokin P-Type filter system**

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**72mm Adapter Ring** £4.99  
**77mm Adapter Ring** £4.99  
**82mm Adapter Ring** £4.99  
**Standard Holder** £5.99  
**Wide Angle Holder** £6.99  
**Filter Wallet (hold 8 filters)** £9.99

**Six-Piece ND Filter Kit £43.99**

Here's a kit which includes all the popular ND filters, and everything you need to get started! The kit contains: 1x ND2 Filter, 1x ND4 Filter, 1x ND8 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x P-Type Filter Holder, 1x P-Type Adapter Ring of your choice (49-82mm).

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**ND4** £9.99  
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**ND2 Hard Graduated** £11.99  
**ND4 Soft Graduated** £11.99  
**ND4 Hard Graduated** £11.99  
**ND8 Soft Graduated NEW** £13.99  
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 ES-711 Canon 50/1.4 £9.99  
 ET-60 Canon 75-300/4-5.6 £9.99  
 ET-65B Canon 70-300/4-5.6 £9.99  
 ET-67 Canon 100/2.8 Macro £9.99  
 ET-67B Canon 60/2.8 £9.99  
 EW-60C Canon 18-55 IS £7.99  
 EW-73B Canon 17-85 IS £9.99  
 EW-78B Canon 28-135 IS £9.99  
 EW-78D Canon 18-200 IS £9.99  
 EW-78E Canon 18-55 IS £12.99  
 EW-83C Canon 17-40/4.0 £12.99  
 EW-83J Canon 17-55/2.8 £12.99  
 HB-45 Nikon 18-55 VR £7.99  
 SH-006 Sony 18-70/3.5-5.6 £9.99

### Screw-Fit Lens Hoods

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 58mm Shaped Petal Hood £6.99  
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Lens Caps Centre-Pinch Style £2.99  
 Lens Caps White Balance £9.99  
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 Rear Caps Ni/Ca/Pz/O/So £3.99

## STEPPING RINGS & MACRO

### Step-Up and Step-Down Rings

Stepping rings are used to "step-up" or "step-down" from one filter thread size to another.

34-37mm 52-55mm 58-55mm 67-62mm  
 37-43mm 52-58mm 58-62mm 67-77mm  
 43-48mm 55-52mm 58-67mm 72-57mm  
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 Folded: 65cm  
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 Load: 10.0kg  
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 Folded: 65cm  
 Height: 178cm  
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 Load: 5.0kg  
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**MM294C4**  
 Carbon Fibre 4-section monopod.  
 Folded: 49cm  
 Height: 151cm  
 Weight: 0.50kg  
 Load: 5.0kg  
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 Weight: 1.58kg  
 Max Load: 5.0kg  
 Folded: 60cm  
 Max Height: 153cm

**Triad 60 Lite**  
 A section aluminium alloy tripod including heavy duty damped pan/tilt head and carry case.  
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 Max Load: 5.0kg  
 Folded: 61cm  
 Max Height: 162cm  
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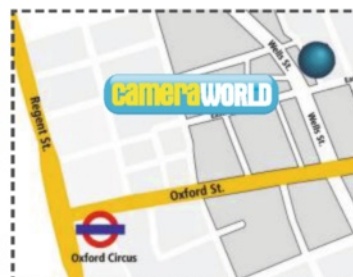
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EOS 1 Body Only	Exc£79	EEXE + 50mm F1.8	E-£49
EOS 3 + E2 Booster	E-£149	F1B CL Chrome + 50mm F1.8 B/Lock	As Seen£59
EOS 3 Body Only	As Seen / E++£99-£129	F1B CL Chrome Body Only	E-£49
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# ROGER HICKS

**Roger considers the rituals of photography, and how much they contribute to our enjoyment of our hobby**

**RITUAL** serves many purposes. The first is familiarity. If we are brought up with a ritual, then it is comforting to see the old ways maintained. This is probably true even if the ritual itself is actually deeply unpleasant, such as human sacrifice or teaching classical economics, so long as you're not the victim. Second, paradoxically in light of the first, it is not exactly everyday: it is something outside our workaday life. Ritual is rarely purely functional. It is a sign that we have (or should have) something beyond the mere daily grind of existence.

Third, it marks something out as important. It is something we are supposed to do properly, in a particular way. Fourth, it serves to separate participants in the ritual from outsiders. Most people welcome the support (real or imagined) that comes from being part of an in-group.

Fifth, it may mark an important rite of passage: a degree ceremony, a wedding. Sixth, it may be pleasurable in its own right (or rite): doing something familiar, doing it well, and doing it in a spirit of right mindfulness, where we are actually concentrating on the task in hand, instead of thinking about what we are going to do next or what we saw on television last night.

Seventh, we may know (or at least believe) that when the ritual is finished, we are likely to feel better: purified, relaxed, happy, whatever. It can change the way we look at things and experience things.

Most commonly, ritual is associated with religion, but quite honestly, if most of us look at the world around us, religion plays an ever-smaller part. Forty years ago, when I first visited France, every village had signs on the outskirts, listing the times of masses. These were mostly long gone when I moved to the village where I now live, a bit over a decade ago, but at least we still had our *cure* or village priest, a tiny frail old man with a greater weakness than most for the blood of Christ. Then he died, and now we share a priest with three other villages, and mass rotates from one to the next each week.

However, what really started me thinking about ritual, and prompted this column, was nothing to do with religion. It was the estimable Eddie Mair

presenting *PM* on the BBC Home Service. He was talking about the ritual of playing a vinyl record, and I knew exactly what he meant. Raising the lid on the record deck; pulling the arm to one side; removing the disc first from its outer sleeve, and then from its inner sleeve; squinting at it for dust, and maybe blowing it clean; placing it on the deck; aligning the stylus and lowering it.

If you are too young or too inexperienced to have experienced this ritual, I apologise, but I can provide an alternative that you will almost certainly have witnessed, even if you have not (as I have not) ever practised it: making a roll-up. Pulling the cigarette paper out of the box; pinching out, separating and spreading the tobacco or other ingredients; licking the edge of the paper; rolling it up; fastidiously removing the shreds that hang from either end: we have all seen it done, even if we have not done it.

Now, debates about the relative merits of film and digital are a little passé. But Mr Mair's comments on vinyl prompted a way of looking at things I had not previously considered. It is the ritualistic aspect of shooting film, especially with a fully manual camera and your own darkroom.

With a modern autofocus digital camera, you shove the card in the slot and turn the camera on. If you are feeling a bit fancy, you may set the ISO and the white balance, but equally you may leave either on auto. It's a bit like turning on a washing machine: you may or may not choose to vary the programme. After that, you press the button.

Now consider the ritual of the film camera. Wiggling the cassette into its cavity. Persuading the sprocket-holes to engage on the drive. Winding on, watching for the rewind knob to start turning. Taking a meter reading: turning the shutter speed dial and the aperture ring. Focusing. Finishing the roll. Rewinding. Loading the film onto a developing spool. Mixing the chemicals. Timing the sequences. Washing. Hanging up to dry. Printing.

Some enjoyed it. Some don't (didn't). But if your photography lacks some of the magic it had in the past – well, ask yourself how much you're missing the ritual. **AP**

**'If your photography lacks some of the magic it had in the past – well, ask yourself how much you're missing the ritual'**

**Roger Hicks** is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at [www.rogerandfrances.com](http://www.rogerandfrances.com)

## Editorial

Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU  
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